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HOW ONE RIDE CAN
CHANGE YOUR LIFE



YOLANDI DU TOIT
RIDES THE MERIDA
NINETY-NINE 9. TEAM

**EDITOR'S
CHOICE**

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RACE
READY
29ers

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NEWBIES
BUILD ENDURANCE FAST!

P.37

SKIN CANCER
ARE YOU REALLY PROTECTED?

P.44



ARIANE KLEINHANS' POWER BREAKFAST P34





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Adam Craig and Kelly McGarry Photo: Ale Di Lullo

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GIRO



55 THE RIDE OF YOUR LIFE

Nine riders, from all walks of life, share their inspiring stories about the one ride that changed their lives.

COLLATED BY BICYCLING STAFF

66 DESERT RATS

Ever had sand in your Vaseline while riding a stage race? Renay Groustra experienced this – and more – while racing in Oman.

BY RENAY GROUSTRA

72 PERFECT FLOW

Get zen and find cycling enlightenment with these yoga moves, designed to improve flexibility and strength while making you a happier rider. BY LEAH FLICKINGER

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GEAR

81 | 9 RIPPING RACE-READY 29ERS

South Africans are spoilt for choice when it comes to super-fast mountain bikes. We choose the best – so you can, too.

By Oli Munnik

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ON THE COVER

Yolandi du Toit, former road pro now grinding the local MTB circuit for Garmin SA on her Merida Ninety-Nine 9. Team. Check out her bike's full specs on p32.

PHOTOGRAPH BY EWALD SADIE. DU TOIT WEARS FTECH CLOTHING AND RIDES A MERIDA NINETY-NINE 9. TEAM.



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Bicycling

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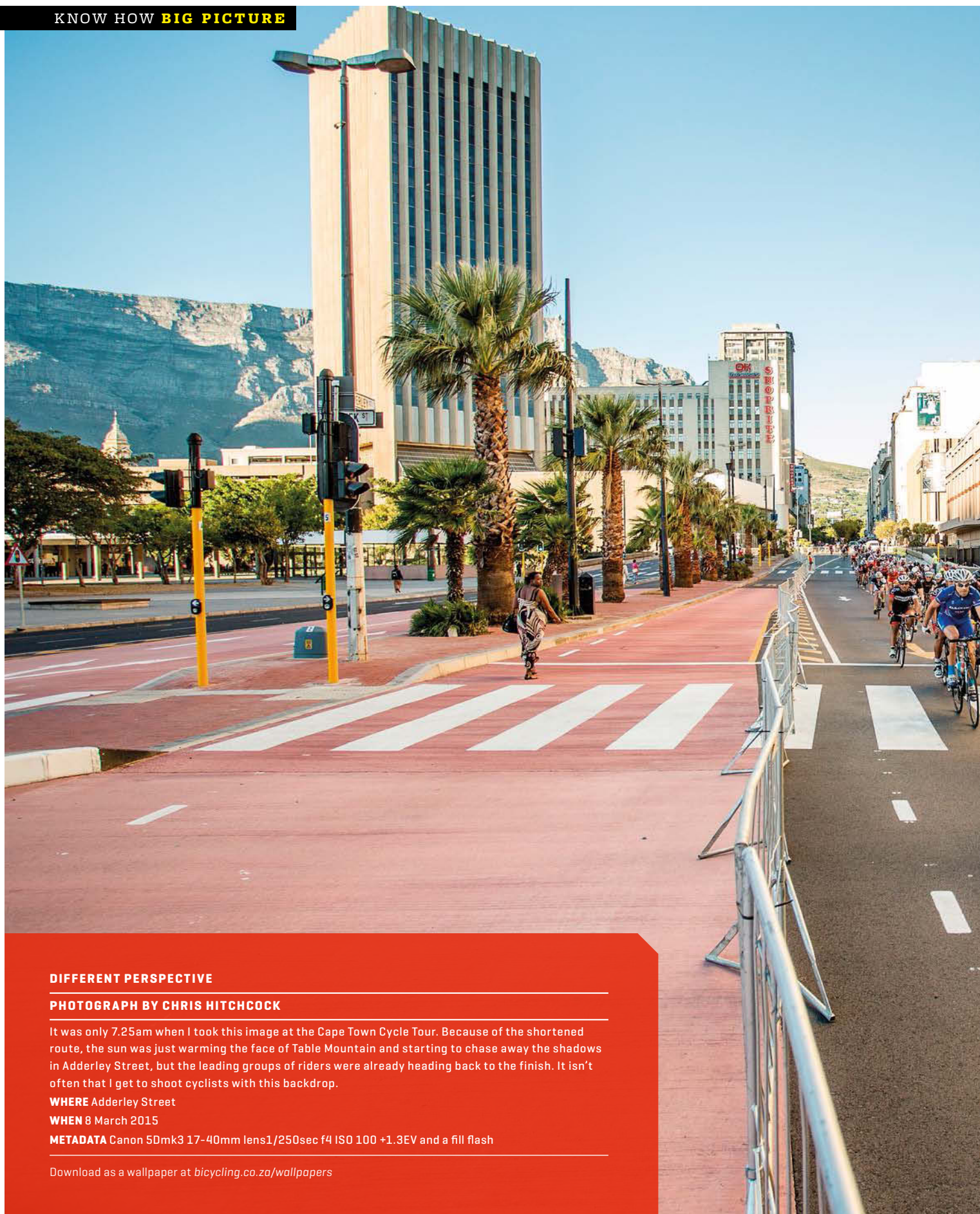
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DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS HITCHCOCK

It was only 7.25am when I took this image at the Cape Town Cycle Tour. Because of the shortened route, the sun was just warming the face of Table Mountain and starting to chase away the shadows in Adderley Street, but the leading groups of riders were already heading back to the finish. It isn't often that I get to shoot cyclists with this backdrop.

WHERE Adderley Street

WHEN 8 March 2015

METADATA Canon 5Dmk3 17-40mm lens 1/250sec f4 ISO 100 +1.3EV and a fill flash

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THE SPIRIT SQUAD

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS HITCHCOCK

Following the wildfires that had devastated the route at the Cape Town Cycle Tour, there was a particular feeling of thankfulness and solidarity toward those who courageously spent hour after hour, day after day, beating back the flames. Many riders expressed this in their cycling attire.

WHERE Rhodes Drive

WHEN 8 March 2015

METADATA Canon 7Dmk2 70-200mm lens 1/1600sec f3.2 ISO 800 +1.0EV

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THE CHARACTERS

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS HITCHCOCK

When I saw Brenda Nicholson riding towards me dressed as Superwoman, I actually burst out laughing. It was so unexpected, yet at the same time so much in the spirit of the shortened Cape Town Cycle Tour that I had to include this image.

WHERE Rhodes Drive

WHEN 8 March 2015

METADATA Canon 7Dmk2 70-200mm lens
1/1600sec f3.2 ISO 600 +1.0EV

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Go Further

RANTS & RAVES

► SO, WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY TO US?

WINNING LETTER

Life Changer

2012 was a life-changing year for me. Weighing in at 150-plus kilos, I started mountain biking. I did slow, easy rides with my wife and a friend, and made small changes to my diet. My first event was 15km and I almost didn't finish. Now, three years later, I weigh just under three digits, ride any distance, and have joined the Absa Cape Epic as a Day Tripper. Thank you for all the info and advice I've received from you over the past three years. This has added so much value to my cycling – and definitely more years to my life.

– JACQUES HERSELMAN

WIN!

→ Email your RANTS – AND RAVES! – to andre.valentine@media24.com...

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RACING BUZZ



"Brilliant race, lots for all riders and all abilities! As a first-time stage-racer, it was great. Food was fantastic; water points were brilliant and had ice-cold watermelon! Day two, the play day, was wet and slippery, didn't play enough!! Will be back." – John Bainbridge, on the FNB Wines2Whales Ride

"Excellent single tracks and beautiful views, but the climbs are too tough for the average mountain bike rider. The ascent might keep riders away next year – just my thought." – Louis Helmand, on the Cape Town Cycle Tour MTB Challenge

"Thank you for a well-organised race, friendly marshals, and wonderful refreshment points!" – Heidi Coetzee, on the Carnival City Macsteel National Classic

"Always a good ride, and it was very well organised. Having visible name tags for the marshals was a nice touch and made it a personal 'thank you' when you passed them on the route, and their smiles were big and contagious." – Eric Bryce-Borthwick, on the Value Logistics Fast One 2015

As The Name Suggests

Is it too much to ask to put our snack wrappers back in our pockets? This goes for the water stations, too: I shudder every time I go past these points and see the area scattered with plastic sachets. You'd think that as (presumably) outdoor-loving people, we'd spare a thought for keeping our environment clean.

On a positive note, a big thanks to the Carnival City Macsteel National Classic for putting our first names on our numbers. It increased camaraderie, groups were chatty, and it was really good to hear your name in the race, often along with words of encouragement.

– CAROL JACOBS

Better Than My Prime

In high school I cycled regularly; I did SA champs twice, in 2001 and 2002, as well as a couple of OFM classics and 94.7's. In 2003 I had a crash, and lost my passion – and confidence. Then in 2009 I started riding again, as I'd picked up weight. I was 64kg in 2003; by 2009, I was 136kg. I moved to Bloemfontein to work at a cycle shop and met some people who I started training with. I am fitter now than I was in 2002, and my weight is down to 92kg (44kg off). I've also done three races over the past year: the 94.7 (3:02, 94.7km), The Fast One (2:32, 96km), and the OFM classic (2:43, 102km). These are my best classics ever – and faster than when I was a junior.

– PAUL BOSHOFF

READER TWEETS

@BrettDuminy

@Bicycling_SA @OliverMunnik well done to the SA boys. Oli... you must have been in the hurtlocker as your blog was very quiet since day 2!

@KateSlegrova

Friday-night read! Last year I was in for @AbsaCapeEpic This year going to watch. #preggie @Bicycling_SA

@MartinYoung

@Bicycling_SA hey guys - we're making some cool stuff from cycling scrap – could you take a look at Reborne Furniture on Facebook? 📷



WHAT IS IT?

Cyclism: FACEPLANT

FAYS PLARNT (COLLOQUIALISM)

TO COME OFF YOUR BIKE AND LAND FACE-FIRST. NOT TO BE MISTAKEN FOR THAT PIMPLY ORGANISM YOU HAD GROWING ON YOUR CHEEK IN HIGH SCHOOL. ALTHOUGH COME TO THINK OF IT, THE RASH YOU SUSTAIN THANKS TO LANDING FACE-FIRST SHOULD REALLY BE CALLED A FACEFLOWER, E.G.:

MATE: "WHAT'S THAT, MAN?!"

YOU: "OH, JUST A FACEFLOWER I GOT FROM THAT FACEPLANT I HAD..."

IT'S TIME TO FLY

When it's about getting from point A to point B quickly, grab your Superfly and start hammering. That's what Trek Factory Racing does every time out.



The Greatest Ride

OUR MOST MEMORABLE RIDES ARE ARGUABLY THE ONES WITH THOSE CLOSEST TO US...



MY FATHER'S ALWAYS BEEN A GREAT SPORTSMAN. A TOP AMATEUR GOLFER IN HIS YOUTH, A LEAGUE SQUASH PLAYER FOR YEARS, A COUPLE OF COMRADES MARATHONS TO HIS NAME AND A MASTER OF ANYTHING REQUIRING A RACQUET.

Ironically, my two younger brothers and I – while dallying a bit with squash and golf in our teens – never really took to the sports my dad excelled in. Instead we started off as triathletes, swimming, biking and running to the point of

us have turned our passion for multi-sports into a passion for two sports – running and cycling. Our shared Facebook posts are almost always a link to a cycling or running story, and the first people to 'like' our Strava uploads are invariably our brothers.

It's only been recently that my father – now in his 70's – has decided to give this cycling malarky a go. We discussed getting him a bike, and he refused to believe that he might have to spend "up to R5 000" for anything decent. "There's

no way I'm spending that much on a bicycle," he pronounced.

But spend R5K he finally did; and after careful persuasion, he also agreed to proper cycling shorts, a cycling shirt, a helmet, and some

old-school weave gloves.

He was set.

So during a trip to Durban a while ago, we finally got it together to go for a ride around his neck of the woods at

Summerveld, near Hillcrest.

I jumped on my eldest son's bike and borrowed his helmet, and my father suited up in his only set of cycling gear to explore the surrounds of an area better known for its horse-training grounds.

We meandered along some single tracks, cruised past the training ovals, and rounded it off with a beer at the pub afterwards. I'm not sure either of us really raised a sweat. Instead we rode together, snapped a few selfies and took in the delight of a route safe from traffic, noise and pollution.

I've spent many hours playing competitive sport with my father, but that ride was one my most memorable events. He was doing something I loved, and revelling (in his own very English way!) in the journey. And he got to understand that it's not how fast you go, or who wins, but the shared experience that's important.

Mike
EDITOR

@MIKEFINCHSA

“It's only been recently that my father – now in his 70's – has decided to give this cycling malarky a go.

obsession. My middle brother Simon took to it so well that he won the African champs in 1998, and went on to race as a pro in France for eight years.

Since our triathlon days, the three of



My Best Friend

OUR COVER MODEL AND PRO CYCLIST YOLANDI DU TOIT ON HER GREATEST RIDES

“We would start our interval together at the bottom of the drag, and I would try my utmost to stay with my dad for as long as possible. Every year I managed to keep up with him a little longer, until eventually I could stay on his wheel until we reached the top. My dad would be so proud of me for hanging on, and I would be so happy I was able to keep up with my hero. Not only did we motivate each other during our ‘drag-interval’ sessions, we always had a friendly rivalry while chasing each other. Whether it was around the Phakisa race track on Tuesday evenings or during the local weekend races, there would always be a race within a race.”

NOW TURN TO PAGE 55, ‘THE RIDE OF YOUR LIFE’, FOR MORE INSPIRING STORIES...



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EDITED BY ANDRÉ VALENTINE



GUSTAV KLOTZ

OFF TRACK

→ FIND A NEW RIDE

As we head into autumn, now's the time to switch up your routine and do something different. Like some of the world's leading riders did when they took part in the Kayamandi Aramex Songo.info Champions Race in March. Here's former world champ José Hermida busting some moves past wide-eyed locals, all in aid of a wonderful charity. – André Valentine

THIS MONTH WE...



...Watched In Awe

AS ARIANE KLEINHANS AND ANNIKA LANGVAD DECIMATED A 27-MINUTE DEFICIT

They were penalised 1h13 for taking a wrong turn during stage two of the ABSA Cape Epic and at the start of stage three were in fourth spot, 27 minutes behind the leaders. But that didn't hold them back, and they hauled back the time deficit and replaced it with a seven-minute lead – in one stage. That feat set the tone, and their lead grew and grew until they won the category by more than an hour.



...Said 'Oops!'

WHEN WE DISCOVERED A MISTAKE IN OUR GEAR STORY

We confess, we're only human; and like Lance Armstrong, we occasionally make... slight errors of judgement. In April's 'Little Rippers' feature the Chillafish BMXie was mistakenly called the Muna BMXie. Our gear ed apologises profusely, alleging "the copy must have been written late on a Friday afternoon". But we're a team, and we all had a hand in it, so we're all saying *deep sigh* WE'RE SOOORRRRY.



...Celebrated Wildly

WHEN HOFFMAN BEAT CAVENDISH

We respect Mark Cavendish and everything he's achieved in the cycling game, but we *are* proudly South African. So when local lad Nolan Hoffman beat the Manx Missile in the 'Sprint At The Point' [all right, we'll stop now], we jumped up and down so much we spilled our coffee [it was too early for beer]. Admittedly, it wasn't a straight sprint between the two; also, Cav didn't have a team here – just Mark Renshaw. But top speedsters worldwide struggle to beat those two in a sprint; and anyway, you can only beat what's in front of you. Hats off to the Hoff.

STAFF Q&A

WHAT SONG GETS YOU PUMPED BEFORE A RIDE?

MYLES KELSEY (ADVERTISING SALES) GOOD THINGS – RIVAL SONS

BRYONY MCCORMICK (DEPUTY EDITOR) SHAKE IT OFF – TAYLOR SWIFT

ANDRÉ VALENTINE (EDITORIAL ASSISTANT) PARABOL/PARABOLA – TOOL

OLI MUNNIK (GEAR EDITOR) CLOSER THAN THIS – ST LUCIA

RATED OR SLATED

Rated

THE JUNIOR ELIMINATOR SERIES

It's back! Hang on – you say you haven't heard of it? Well, it used to be the 'Inter School' Eliminator Series, but because it's now sanctioned (by CSA, not SA Schools Cycling – it was unsanctioned last year), organisers were forced to drop 'School' from the name. At least they can

still give cash prizes, to – as event director Tyrone Rawlins puts it – "create professionalism and the drive to reach the top step". They wouldn't be able to if they fell under SASC, as monetary prizes are against the archaic policies of the Department of Basic Education.

Slated

THE NON-RED PARTY POOPERS

On the instruction of StyleMan we have been told to slate all of those who didn't ride in red at the Cape Town Cycle Tour, in support of the Cape's firefighters. If you read his column in this issue you'll see that he's already laid

into one poor soul for actually complaining to him about the red theme. So as our civic duty (and so as not to be next on StyleMan's list), we take this opportunity to say to all those who didn't ride in red... shame on you!

Torn

THE EPIC TRACKER

While the event itself was filled with excitement and drama, if you used the Epic online live tracker, it was hard to tell. Maybe we've just been spoiled by the Tour de France version, with its simple display and live updates. Sadly, the Epic's was just a bunch

of icons on a Google Maps screenshot. Sometimes you couldn't even tell which direction the riders were going. On the up side, though, it helped us follow the progress of Team *Bicycling* – who had a solid run, finishing 47th in the masters, 167th overall. **B**

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BY OLI MUNNIK

PHOTO BY JAMES GARAGHTY

PIIIIIIIIIING!

San Francisco-based Spurcycle is not a company promising to offer the lightest, fastest or strongest cycling products; rather, their output is characterised by singular beauty and attention to fine detail. Their explicit intention is to design and create useful items – like the bike bell pictured – that will become lasting favourites among those who use them. Spurcycle bike bells are engineered to fit any handlebar and are created from premium-quality brass and stainless steel. They offer a distinctive sound, warning other road users of your presence in the most stylish way possible.

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EXTREME MOTION

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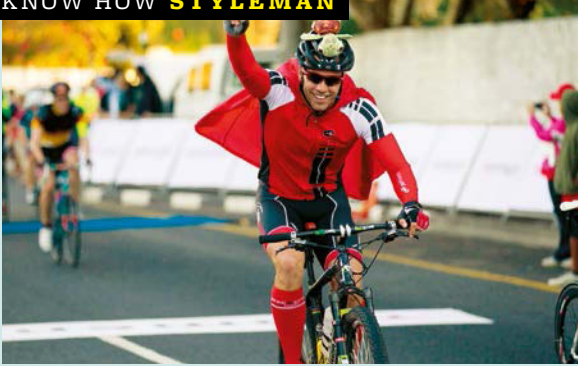
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Red Red Whine

I saw lots of people wearing those long red socks during the Cycle Tour. I even saw one guy who wore knee-length red socks, and then had short red socks that said 'The Bike Shop' over them. He also had a red cycling top. His eyes were a little red, too, and he said he'd been drinking with a professional cyclist the night before. (Some okes can really talk nonsense.) I told him I would complain to you, that you can only push fashion so far for charity or solidarity.

– Jan, Sea Point

You're becoming a regular contributor, Jan, and that can be good or bad. Bad, because you risk falling into the pit of whining; and good, because it shows you care about the look and feel of the sport. From what I've been told – and this was by a politician, so divide by two and minus 10 – they sold some R25 000-worth of those Unogwaja socks. A friend of mine, let's call him the Iceman, wears them all the time, even when it isn't Friday. I wore red on Cycle Tour Sunday; and as I cruised along with all the rush of a civil servant at 1.30pm on a Friday, the crowds applauded me.

Others – Bevan Cullinan the comedian, for instance – made foam firemen's helmets to go over their cycling helmets. Some people can go too far with their kit (those wearing Astana replica jerseys, for example); but after the week that Cape Town had, we needed a little silliness. Better red than dead, Jan, better red than dead.

Back To Basics

Was it wrong of me to ride hard at the 47km Cycle Tour to get a fast time? I finished really high up in my starting group, and also broke two hours. I told my missus about my time, and she said I was a moron. I mean, cycling is about racing, isn't it?

– Alan, Bergvliet

Your missus is a wise woman, Alan. Although 'moron' is a bit harsh. Apparently one of the professional teams complained that the Cycle Tour organisers should have consulted them before deciding to reduce the elite race to 47km. Here's the thing: the Cycle Tour isn't just about them. It's about the almost 35 000 who lined up to have a jol. It's about those who stopped at Forries for a beer. It's about the editor of this magazine helping someone to finish a race for the first time. Sunday 8 March 2015 was not about racing; it was about taking the Cycle Tour back to its roots (routes?) as a protest ride, a celebration of the bicycle. **B**

RIDER ² RIDER

► USEFUL TIPS FROM OUR READERS

Zip It

Pack your spare tube in a Ziploc bag, and squirt some talcum powder into the bag before sealing. This prevents the tube becoming tacky, protects it from water and dust, and reduces the risk of tube pinching when you have to put it in the tyre.

– Denzyl O'Donoghue

Lemony Fresh

Next time you clean your chain: instead of using toxic degreasers, fill your chain cleaner with regular lemon juice and a teaspoon of dishwashing liquid. Give your pedals a few turns, and watch it strip away all the muck.

– Javed Hoosen



WINNING TIP

Paper It Over

To quick-dry your shoes, crumple newspaper into a ball and put it inside. After an hour, replace it with new paper; and after the second round, you're ready to go.

– Dean Bowen



WIN!

A VERMARC CYCLING JERSEY WORTH R1 299

➔ Email your Reader Tip to bicycling@media24.com. If it's selected as the Winning Tip, this rad prize could be yours.

PRO TWEETS

Mark Cavendish @MarkCavendish

"After 4 days of having my entire body fall out of my arse, I think the first few days of @TirrenAdriatico are going to be hard going!"

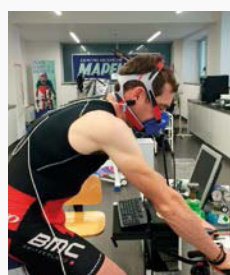
Chris Froome @chrisfroome

"That moment you look back & realise you're about to win a stage of the Tour de France #fbf #2012 #tdf #motivation"

[Froome looking for some throwback inspiration ahead of Le Tour]

Cadel Evans @CadelOfficial

"In an effort to give something back to the world of sports physiology... and keep an eye on my health... #VO2maxtest"





THE CALL OF THE WILD



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Race Nerves: The Burry Effect

JUST WHEN YOU THINK YOU'VE LEARNED EVERYTHING THERE IS TO LEARN FROM BURRY STANDER, SOMETHING COMES ALONG TO CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE.

Burry was an amazing man in so many ways, but one of the things that always reminds me of this is the way he handled race nerves. Yes, he definitely got nervous; but he managed it in such a positive way – he'd say that getting nervous means you care about the result, and want the race to go well.

He would calm himself down by watching *How I Met Your Mother*, *The Big Bang Theory*, or *Two And A Half Men* – shows to make him laugh, and be positive. For hours he'd tell me how he was going to kick his competitors' butts, and holeshot the starts.

I learned a lot from him, and carry this with me to every event I do: before the race, I imagine myself crossing the finish line with the top girls. I imagine the excitement of being on the podium;

“Getting nervous means you care about the result, and want the race to go well...”

and if I know the course, I imagine myself riding it.

I look for reasons why the race will go well instead of reasons why it won't. If you've done everything in training that you could have, you're well prepared; and by staying as calm as possible, you'll use less energy before the actual event.

Racing is stressful. And if you want to perform, and get results, it's even more nerve-racking. But the mind is a powerful thing; once you've learned how to cope with the nervous energy and turn it into positive energy, you'll be unstoppable. **B**



Cherise Stander (Team RECM) is the 2014 Cycle Tour ladies champion, and represented South Africa at the 2014 Commonwealth Games.



SNIPPETS

GOING BIG

PRO FREERIDERS SAM REYNOLDS AND MATT MCDUFF MAY HAVE CONSTRUCTED THE BIGGEST DIRT JUMP ON EARTH, RIGHT HERE IN SA.

They built it at the Garden Route Trail Park, while shooting a video about jump-building called *#PureDarkness*. But they weren't expecting to put up the biggest jump in the world – here's how it happened.

The procedure the pair usually follow is to brief a park owner on the dimensions of the platform they want; then they come in and build the jump. “We usually have a bit of fun and send impossible dimensions to park owners, who can never deliver,” says Reynolds. “But this guy [park owner Rob Dormehl] actually followed the brief, and gave us a massive platform to build our jump with.”

According to Monster Energy SA's Ryan Franklin, who set up the build, they'll have to notify the Guinness Book of World Records to confirm the feat.

Want to check out the jump? Visit gardenroutetrailpark.com for directions.

NEW STUFF

LIQUI-MOLY

A recent arrival in South Africa's growing cycling market is German lubricant manufacturer Liqui-Moly, who now offer a diverse range of products that span the lubricant, bike care and tyre repair segments of the industry. Whether you're looking for dry lube to lubricate your chain during the dry and dusty Highveld winter, or a biodegradable bike cleaner for those muddy Cape winter rides, Liqui-Moly say they have you covered. The range is available from leading retailers nationwide. – OM

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[YOLANDI DU TOIT'S] MERIDA NINETY-NINE 9. TEAM

WORDS: OLI MUNNIK | PHOTO: EWALD SADIE



This month's cover model, Yolandi du Toit, is no stranger to the pain cave. Starting her cycling career on the road in 2004, at the age of 18, she thrived in the women's professional peloton as she raced in both South Africa and Europe. In 2007 she became the first South African woman to participate in the Tour de Feminine, the ladies' Tour de France. After switching to MTB in 2009, Du Toit now races for Garmin SA on the local mountain-biking circuit. We checked out her Merida dual-sus at the Absa Cape Epic prologue.

FOLLOW YOLANDI ON TWITTER @YOLANDI_DUTOIT

GROUPSET

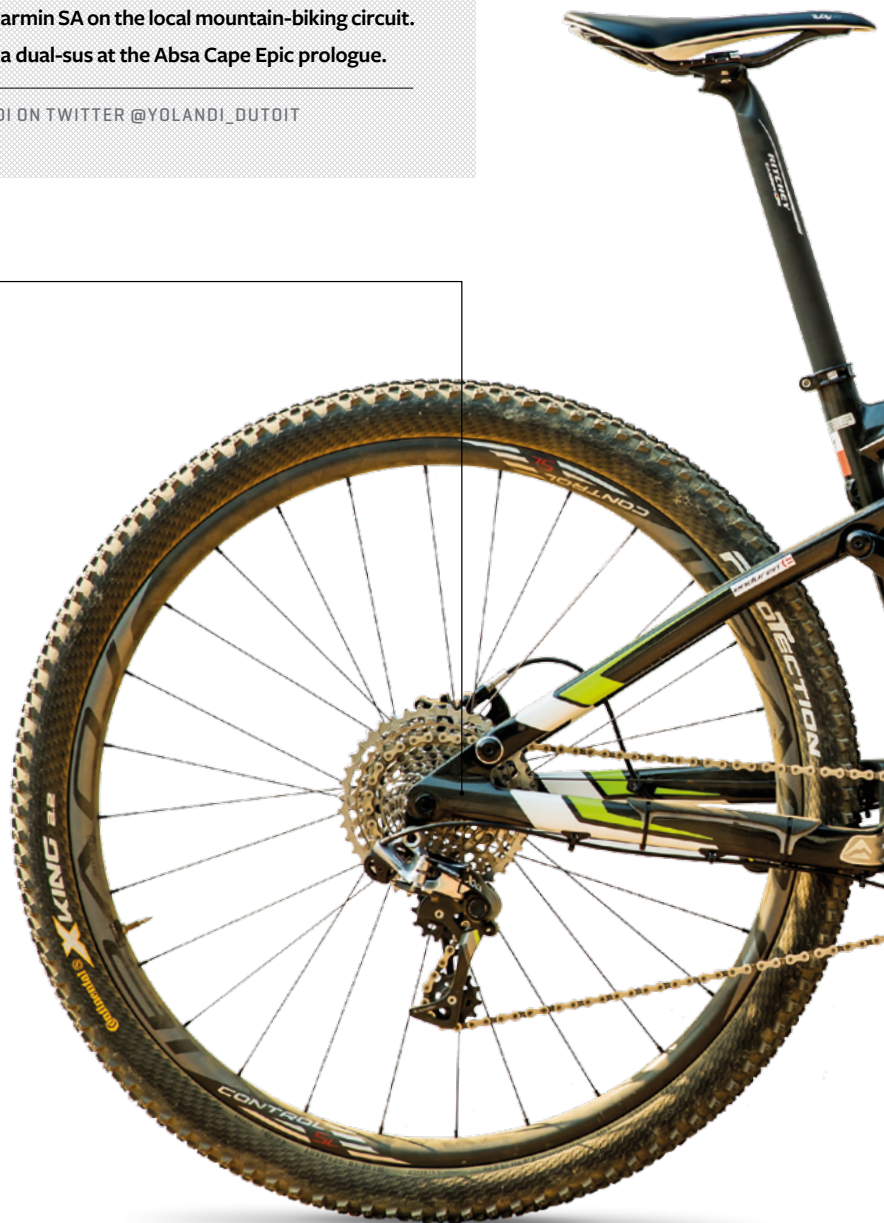
Du Toit's groupset is made up exclusively of SRAM parts – except for the chain, which is a new product from local lubricant company Squirt. Made for Squirt by KMC, this high-end chain is the first to be sold pre-coated with a layer of lube, making it ready to use straight out of the box. Testing it at the Epic, Du Toit found the dry lube kept the chain clean and grit-free throughout the race.

Braking and shifting is taken care of by a SRAM XX brakeset and trigger shifters, bolted together via MatchMakers. Gearing is critical at the Epic; Du Toit opted for a 30T up front, and an 11-speed 10-42T XX1 cassette. This gave her the range to tackle the steep sections of the prologue, without killing her legs for the later stages.

PARTS

Comfort is key for ensuring you can crank out the watts during the Epic. A women-specific Specialized Rudy saddle, with a width of 155mm, gave Du Toit the perfect perch from which to turn the pedals. It's bolted on to a 31.6mm Ritchey WCS Carbon seatpost, which adds further comfort via a small but noticeable degree of damping.

Her cockpit features a 90mm, six-degree PRC stem and 680mm PRC handlebar combination. Pedals are the ever-reliable Shimano XTR SPDs, while green silicone ESI grips cushion her hands. Du Toit only needed one carbon Merida bottle cage for the prologue, but added a seatpost-mounted cage for the rest of the week. Vital statistics were recorded and managed by Garmin's range-topping Edge 1000.



FRAME AND FORK

Given the physical demands of the Epic, Du Toit made the obvious choice, racing Merida's full-carbon Ninety-Nine 9 dual-suspension frame. It weighs in at only 1 900g (without rear shock) and offers 100mm of travel, thanks to a RockShox Monarch XX rear shock. Front suspension is taken care of by a 100mm RockShox Sid XX-29. Both feature remote hydraulic lockouts that attach via SRAM MatchMakers, resulting in a clean handlebar.

The frame is built using Merida's nano matrix carbon, featuring nanoparticles that reinforce the epoxy-based matrix structure, improving hit-resistance by up to 40%. This is a great advantage during marathons such as the Epic, where rocks and sticks flung up by riders' wheels batter your bike daily.

Another small but very effective addition for optimal frame protection is the light and inconspicuous internal block system, which stops the handlebar from smashing into your frame, should you crash or drop the bike. The system uses a clamping ring around the fork's steerer tube; once positioned with a bolt, it works together with blocking inserts to make sure the handlebar only turns within a certain angle, stopping just before hitting the frame.

WHEELS AND TYRES

A set of carbon Specialized Roval Control SL wheels are the perfect tool for the job. Light, durable and fast, these wheels take care of business, rolling over obstacles and smoothing the rougher sections of the route, thanks to their carbon lay-up.

Grip and further damping is provided by 29"x2.2" Continental X-Kings, with sidewall protection that helps to prevent punctures and sidewall cuts from sharp rocks – without doubt one of the most common mechanicals suffered at the Cape Epic.



Powerhouse Breakfast

Epic women's winner Ariane Kleinhans shares her secrets to creating the breakfast of champs.

BY ANDRÉ VALENTINE

Ariane Kleinhans ate the competition alive at the Absa Cape Epic in March, alongside partner Annika Langvad. But that's not all she ate: a key part of what makes her such a good mountain biker is that she has a solid breakfast to start her day. So we asked her what goes into her breakfasts, and what the thinking is behind every ingredient. Before training Kleinhans has two bowls of breakfast – one a flavourful fruit salad concoction, the other a muesli mix. Here's what goes into them.

BOWL 1

Two seasonal fruits
Slow-release protein powder
Nuts
Nature's Source seed mix
Cinnamon
Cloves
Cocoa
Goji berries
Salt
Milk
Plain low-fat yoghurt

BOWL 2

Muesli mix
(Tia's granola without sugar)
Whey isolate powder
Salt
Cottage cheese
Milk

FRUIT

"I use whatever's in season, but it's mostly apples and some berries, or a peach. Sometimes I'll chop a carrot into it."

SEEDS

"This contains pumpkin, sunflower, sesame and flax seeds. I also sometimes mix chia seeds in to add an extra superfood."

CINNAMON

"Cinnamon regulates sugar levels."

CLOVES

"Cloves are an anti-inflammatory substance."

MILK IN BOWL 1

"Because the protein powder thickens the mix, I add milk to make it a bit runnier."

SLOW-RELEASE PROTEIN POWDER

Ariane uses the USN Casein Slow Release Protein mix to help her feel fuller for longer. But she will only use it for training, not racing.

WHEY ISOLATE POWDER

USN Supreme Whey Protein is Ariane's choice and is absorbed easily.

ARIANE'S PRE-RACE BREAKFAST TRICK

"BEFORE RACE DAY I SOAK A BOWL OF MUESLI OVERNIGHT IN LOW-FAT MILK, TOGETHER WITH SOME WHEY ISOLATE AND A PINCH OF SALT. SOAKING MAKES IT EASIER TO DIGEST; AND BECAUSE THE MARATHON RACES ALWAYS START EARLY (AND I STILL WANT TO GET ENOUGH SLEEP), I NEED SOMETHING THAT'S EASY TO DIGEST." **B**

Yolandi du Toit
Professional Mountain Biker



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RED-E

KNOW HOW **COACH**

The Power To Go Longer!

BY MARK CARROLL

THE RULES OF POWER ENDURANCE.

MOST OF US BELIEVE THAT TO PRODUCE HIGH POWER LEVELS, WE NEED TO BE GOING FLAT OUT. BUT UNLESS YOUR DISCIPLINE IS THE TRACK SPRINT, POWER REALLY MEANS POWER ENDURANCE – WHICH TRANSLATES TO SPEED ENDURANCE. Good power endurance is all about maintaining a high power output for a set distance, *without* going flat out.

This is what gives faster cyclists the capacity to hold a higher speed for longer without blowing, whether it's up a two-kay hill or over a five-hour ride. To illustrate power endurance: on a flat road, a recreational cyclist will feel he's going flat out while trying to keep up with a professional cyclist who's riding at his steady two-hour pace – despite their power readings being the same.

We can all achieve good power endurance; but there are mistakes we make that prevent us from doing this. So here's a short outline of two such performance limiters, and some training advice on reducing them.

MISTAKING STRENGTH FOR POWER

In cycling, power is about having a well-developed aerobic system; yet often, it's confused with strength. Yes, some strength is needed to turn the pedals – but if you're riding at, say, 80rpm for two hours, the actual force per pedal stroke is fairly low, compared to what you lift when strength-training. You don't strength-train to build cycling strength, but rather to develop muscle-fatigue resistance and speed endurance. Power comes from an efficient pedal stroke, not by how hard you can stomp the pedals.

UNDERVALUING STRENGTH TRAINING

Strength still has an important place, especially at full gas in a sprint, or up shorter climbs, or in hard attacks of five minutes or less. For example, on hills or in attack scenarios, weak leg muscles can compress venous blood vessels, reducing bloodflow back to the heart. The effect is that the heart stroke volume

drops; and the only way to compensate is for the heart to try and beat faster, to keep up with demand – if there's still capacity left. In a case like this, you're going to risk blowing sooner. On long rides of several hours, strength training also benefits slow-twitch muscle endurance, improving your average power over these distances.

BUILDING AEROBIC POWER

This needs to be approached with a combination of good-quality, low- to moderate-intensity hours, and high-intensity intervals. The volume ratio of low to high intensity is up for debate; but a safe ratio is 10-20% high-intensity intervals, 80-90% low to moderate intensity, which should include some threshold intervals. Discipline is important here: surprisingly, the average cyclist inadvertently skews the ratio in favour of high intensity, because they split lots of high-intensity activities across their training week – doing hill repeats one day, circuits the next, a fast club ride the day after that, etc. The key to maintaining focus on this ratio is to understand the difference between high and low intensity, and to plan your training week according to this.

LOW- TO MODERATE-INTENSITY EXAMPLES

Good-quality, low to moderate intensity means a heart rate range of around 70-80% of maximum, and sitting on the pedals close on 100% of the time. It's easy to do by being conscious of pedal force, keeping an eye on heart rate, and cycling with a group of similar fitness and mindset. It won't take long to see the training effect of this showing through. Try it for just three weeks – ensuring

quality stays high – to really give the training a fair go.

THRESHOLD TRAINING

Once you've got a handle on high-quality, low to moderate training, only then start adding threshold intensity on longer rides. For example, on a four-hour ride, keep it steady for the first three hours; in the final hour, pick the pace up to over 80% heart rate. Choosing a route with some big climbs at the end will make this much easier to do. This is a great quality session: three hours of structural aerobic conditioning, then a final hour for muscle endurance. In a race situation, it's leg fade that tanks performance; and it's this type of training ride that will help you deal with the problem.

HIGH-INTENSITY INTERVAL EXAMPLES

Heart rate can be useless in shorter high-intensity intervals, such as six to 10 repeats of 30- to 60-second explosive hill repeats with three minutes recovery. During longer, but still very intense intervals, such as six repeats of three to four minutes hard with three-minute recovery, your heart rate will 'creep' to around 95% of maximum in the final minute. That still means that for two or three minutes of the exercise, your heart rate will be climbing steadily, even though cadence and pedal force remain constant. If you don't have the luxury of a power meter, using perceived exertion, speed and heart rate in combination will help produce better-paced efforts.

Set aside two days per week for your HIIT days. Rope in a cycling partner of similar strength to help motivation. There's nothing like KOM hill repeats – just don't blow all your matches on the first interval.

STRENGTH TRAINING

The research supports explosive plyometric training as well as heavy strength training of six to eight repetitions. There's a risk of injury with heavy weight and plyometric training, and you shouldn't attempt any of these exercises without technique coaching from a qualified instructor to ensure your form is perfect.

Start with lighter weights on the strength training; and just a single set of each exercise, or you are likely to end up with severe muscle trauma and not be able to train for a while.

Commit a period of eight weeks to your strength and plyometric programme in order to begin to see results – 12 weeks would be better.

Exercises to focus your form on:



- Leg Press
- Dumbbell Lunge
- Bulgarian Squat
- Squat Jump
- Box Jump **B**

FOR MORE STRENGTH-TRAINING ADVICE AND TO SEE THE EXERCISES DONE, go to bicycling.co.za/heavyweight-champion.



Mark Carroll owns Cadence Cycling Performance & chairs the CSA Coaching Commission.

STRONGMAN

As mentioned in the above article, strength training can improve your endurance. But how does it work? Each pedal stroke requires a certain amount of force, and everyone has their own maximum capacity to produce this force. When doing strength training, you increase your maximum capacity to produce this force; and therefore, per pedal stroke, you reduce the percentage of that force you need to use. Overall, you're making less effort. And when you make less effort, you use less fast-twitch muscle, and more of your fatigue-resistant slow-twitch muscle.

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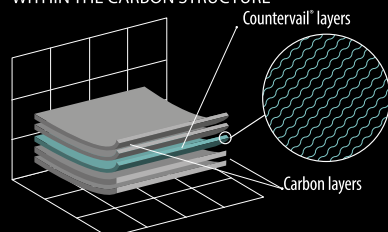
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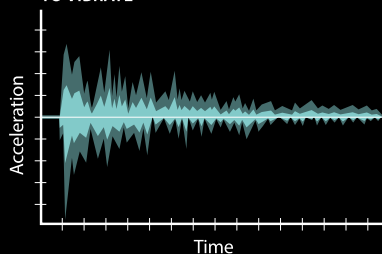
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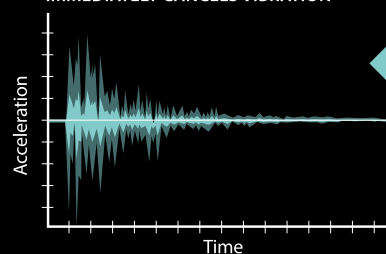


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RESULTS
ABSA CAPE EPIC
2015 WOMEN'S
OVERALL WINNERS

"With the harsh African heat, rough and unpredictable terrain along with the extreme intensity the ABSA Cape Epic delivers day after day, your body goes through immense strain.

As a professional athlete, I have a good understanding of nutrition and believe it makes a significant difference in my performance, whether I'm training or racing. The new USN PUREFIT range offers everything I need to help me perform at my best! EPIC PRO is the perfect ultra-marathon drink, exactly what I need for my discipline. The protein availability prevents muscle breakdown and helps me recover faster, which is very important in an 8 day stage race. I also combine it with USN's VO2 MAX tablets to maximize my performance potential, keeping my blood sugar levels steady throughout each stage. I never once felt a sudden drop in energy, which is absolutely crucial at the ABSA Cape Epic.

The new EPIC PRO is lightly flavoured and contains no colourants or artificial sweeteners (which I strongly believe hampers my performance). It's tasty and very easy to drink even after hours of riding in very hot conditions. In all my years of racing I've never seen a sports supplement range which compares to USN PUREFIT."

"In all my years of racing I've never seen a sports supplement range which compares to USN PureFit."

ARIANE KLEINHANS



COMPLETE ULTRA-ENDURANCE DRINK FOR OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE & RAPID RECOVERY.

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PHOTOGRAPHER: EMMA HILL

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BETCH.NL-SUPERIOR
RIDERS
BART BRENTJENS
OLYMPIC CHAMPION
ABRAAO AZEVEDO
3 X ABSA CAPE EPIC MASTERS
WINNER
RESULTS
CAPE EPIC MASTERS
WINNER 2015



TEAM
TEAM USN
RIDERS
TRAVIS WALKER
ROURKE CROESER
SA NATIONAL CROSS
COUNTRY CHAMPION

RESULTS
ABSA CAPE EPIC 2015
4TH IN THE AFRICAN
JERSEY CATEGORY.
10TH IN THE OVERALL
CATEGORY.

"Even as a professional cyclist, I honestly didn't believe that supplementation could be such a powerful instrument in the quest towards an improved performance level.

I believe that passion breeds success, and in the days before the ABSA Cape Epic, USN got on board to help us achieve our goals. We were guided by a step-by-step process on how to make use of real supplementation, starting with the most important product there is, EPIC PRO.

My stomach doesn't usually agree with most endurance supplements, but EPIC PRO worked perfectly for me. I woke up at around 4:00am and immediately started my day with a serving of EPIC PRO and a serving of VO2 MAX, followed by a pre-race breakfast. During the longest stages at the ABSA Cape Epic, I would consume up to 3 bottles of EPIC PRO, with an additional serving of VO2 MAX around the halfway mark.

Each stage posed its own challenges, but I made sure that I took USN RECOVER as a ritual as soon as I got off the bike. This was followed by a massage and within a couple of hours I would have another serving of EPIC PRO to top up glycogen reserves and to support the recovery process! If you can't recover, your chances of winning will diminish."

ROURKE CROESER

"I have only ever used USN's EPIC PRO during my time racing at the ABSA Cape Epic."

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BART BRENTJENS



Pace Of Mind

BY DR JEROEN SWART

Q I'M NEW TO CYCLING, AND I'M FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO PACE MYSELF CORRECTLY FOR RACES. IN MY FIRST FEW EVENTS I WENT OUT WAY TOO HARD AND ENDED UP CRAMPING, AND SO FATIGUED THAT I HAD TO STOP. HOW DO I GET THIS RIGHT?
– *Graeme, Cape Town*

A Pacing is a phenomenon we apply to all aspects of physical and mental exertion. Whenever we engage in a task we try to optimise our energy resources to complete the task as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Pacing during exercise is a complex activity that involves both the conscious and subconscious brain, and is also dependent on learning.

THE LEARNING PROCESS

During the course of our lifetime, we accumulate experience of our body's response to exercise. If you've ever watched an athletics day at a primary school, you will have seen this in action. The youngest children run at different speeds: some shoot off full tilt, and then walk or rest for a period before continuing; others will walk initially, only to sprint

for the line when they get closer to the finish and realise that they have abundant energy remaining. By adulthood, these mechanisms are well developed.

Research into the mechanisms that regulate these complex processes is still ongoing. But in short: prior experience of exercise duration and energy requirements results in the formation of a 'template' for the exercise bout.

MIND GAMES

At the start of the exercise the subconscious brain interprets signals from various organs, such as the liver and muscle glycogen stores, core temperature, skin temperature, and other key variables. It then sets an initial exercise intensity, based on your template and the available resources that will allow you to finish the event without a catastrophic failure in

any physiological system. But motivation to perform better, the speed of the bunch, changes in terrain and other variables can cause your exercise intensity to rise above that forecasted by the brain.

The brain continually receives signals from the various organs it monitors (known as afferent feedback), and interprets these in relation to how much of the exercise is still to be performed. When the brain computes that the intensity is above what is allowed for the safe completion of the exercise, it sends a signal to the conscious mind. This takes the form of the sense of effort you perceive you are experiencing.

DEFINITION OF EFFORT

Effort is not linked to any physical attribute such as pain or breathlessness. Rather, it is a complex feeling based on the sum of the physical signals from your organs, and how they relate to the amount of exercise still needed and the current exercise intensity.

The greater the discrepancy between your current pace and the optimal pace, the greater your sense of effort will be. It is then up to your conscious decision-making process whether to listen to the warning signs and slow down, or to ignore them altogether and continue at your chosen pace.

Failing to listen to the signals could result in a new PB and a resetting of the 'governor' to allow greater speed in future events. Alternatively, it could result in the inability to complete the event, due to excessively

high core temperature, glycogen depletion, or some other near-failure of homeostasis.

RESEARCH

To date, hundreds of research studies have been conducted investigating the brain's pacing mechanisms.

A research study from my own PhD thesis looked at performance during open-ended exercise to exhaustion. During this study, the subjects received either a dose of amphetamine or a placebo before each trial. After ingesting the amphetamine, subjects rode for 32% longer and at a 19% higher power output in comparison to those who had taken the placebo. But this came at an extra physiological cost: oxygen consumption was 16% higher, the subjects breathed 14% more air each minute, and – most importantly – 'poisonous' lactic acid concentrations were 43% higher. The amphetamines therefore unlocked some of the available resources that were not being used in the natural state.

The late Tommy Simpson, who died tragically on Mont Ventoux during the 1967 Tour de France, regularly ingested up to 45mg of amphetamines prior to key events. One of the key effects of amphetamines is that they block the ability of the brain to perceive heat. As a result, on that extremely hot day, Simpson literally cooked himself to death.

In another recent study, subjects were asked to ride to exhaustion at a power output 20% greater than their peak power, while watching a clock marking their progress. When the



OVERRULED
Amphetamines disable your mental 'governor'. Tommy Simpson found out the hard way.

clock was secretly manipulated to run faster, subjects performed better in real time, despite the fact that they'd been misled into believing that they'd ridden for a longer time. Conversely, when the clock was slowed down, they performed poorly. Depending on which illusion they were given, their self-belief either improved or degraded their performance.

So the next time you think you're exhausted, think again. You might still have a lot left in the tank, thanks to your rather conservative brain. How motivated are you? Should you push through? Then again, if you overrule your 'governor' you might be heading off the edge of a physiological cliff. Only time will tell... **B**

DOCTOR'S ORDERS



Dr Jeroen Swart is a sports physician and exercise physiologist at the Sports Science Institute of South Africa.

CLIMBING SMART

While we all love having a beer, it's wise to not overdo it, especially the night before a ride. This is because, despite beer's reputation as a carbohydrate, alcohol negatively impacts performance. Firstly, alcohol is a diuretic; which mean it leaves your body quickly, taking other fluids with it, leaving you susceptible to dehydration. It also prevents your liver from synthesising glucose from amino acids, which can lead to low glycogen levels, making you feel sluggish. It also interferes with protein synthesis, which increases the risk of muscle damage, resulting in increased pain and stiffness, as well as longer recovery time after strenuous exercise.



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Skin Deep

BY KATHY ANDREWS & ANDRÉ VALENTINE

SKIN CANCER MAY BE ONE OF THE BIGGEST THREATS TO CYCLISTS. IT'S HARD TO DETECT, DIFFICULT TO PROTECT AGAINST, AND SPREADS FAST. HERE'S HOW TO SAVE YOUR SKIN... AND YOURSELF!

My husband, Hugh Andrews, was an avid rider for years. He also windsurfed, ran marathons, paddled more than one Dusi, and ridden many Sani's. In short, he spent a lot of time being active outdoors.

Four years ago, after a ride in the Umkomaas Valley, he noticed that both sides of his groin were a little swollen. Because it wasn't too painful, he didn't get it seen to straight away. But soon after the ride he went to our GP, who sent him straight for a biopsy. A few days later we received the devastating news: he had melanoma cancer.

According to dermatologist Dr Suretha Kannenberg, melanomas are "weight-for-weight, the most dangerous cancer known to man". They are pigment-producing cells known as melanocytes, which can be found on other parts of the body as well. "We also find melanocytes in the eye, and in the membranes around the brain and spinal cord."

Just prior to the diagnosis, he had ridden his best Sani ever and hadn't felt sick, except for some fatigue; but with today's pace of life we put it down to stress from work, and ignored it.

Melanoma cancer originates from too much sun exposure. Before the doctor could prescribe treatment he had to find the primary lesion. Turns out it was a mole on my husband's lower back – a mole that had been rubbed off by his backpack over time. Because it came off, leaving just a small mark, we thought nothing of it, and didn't even get it checked out.

Despite wearing a cycling top, Hugh still got a melanoma; the reason for this, says Dr Kannenberg, is that our cycling kit may not offer as much UV protection as we think. "Tight-fitting cycling clothing that does not specifically state that it blocks UV will not offer the protection the cyclist requires," says Kannenberg. "The more the fabric is stretched, the less protection you get." If you don't have UV-specific kit, she suggests you wear a double layer of clothing to avoid unnecessary UV exposure.

Since then, the journey has been relentless. He's had selected glands removed from both legs, suffered from post-surgery infections which prolonged his recovery, and has had to give up his job. Eight months



into treatment, he developed secondary cancers to the brain, in the form of tumours. They were inoperable, and one was at the base of the skull, putting pressure on his spinal cord. This resulted in paralysis of the right side of his body. New treatments were introduced, along with radiotherapy to shrink the tumours. Since then he has had other treatment regimes, and three more sessions of radiotherapy. We are still fighting the disease.

As a family fighting cancer, we have learnt so much. Like really appreciating the simple things in life that make us happy, and spending time making the most of each day, with the ones we love. My husband has also had to accept that he's no longer able to participate in any of the things he loves, and has to depend on others; which is not easy for him. But he faces each challenge bravely, and has found other ways to occupy his time when he feels well enough.

Our boys have both been amazing with their father. They have shown us both so much love and support, and we have drawn together even closer as a family.

"We don't usually develop new moles after the age of 45; so if you should notice a new mole, it's very important to have it checked by a healthcare professional," says Kannenberg. She also earmarks genetics as a key factor: "If there is family history of melanoma, especially from a first-degree relative, you should be on high alert and protect yourself."

I also believe the sport of MTB instils certain qualities in you, even if they are not inherent in your nature... that *vasbyt*, perseverance and resilience, as you strive to conquer a climb or overcome the obstacles en route, and finally reach the end of a race. I know that's what it's done for me, and I'm very grateful to my husband for having shared his passion with us.

Sunscreen is lauded as the number-one way to protect against UV rays. But Dr Maureen Allem, founder of the Skin, Body and Health Renewal spas, says that extra protection can be found in oral supplementation. This is especially true for instances in which clothing doesn't offer protection – as well as for protecting areas that have no clothing cover at all. "Internal supplementation is very important," says Allem. "Cycling

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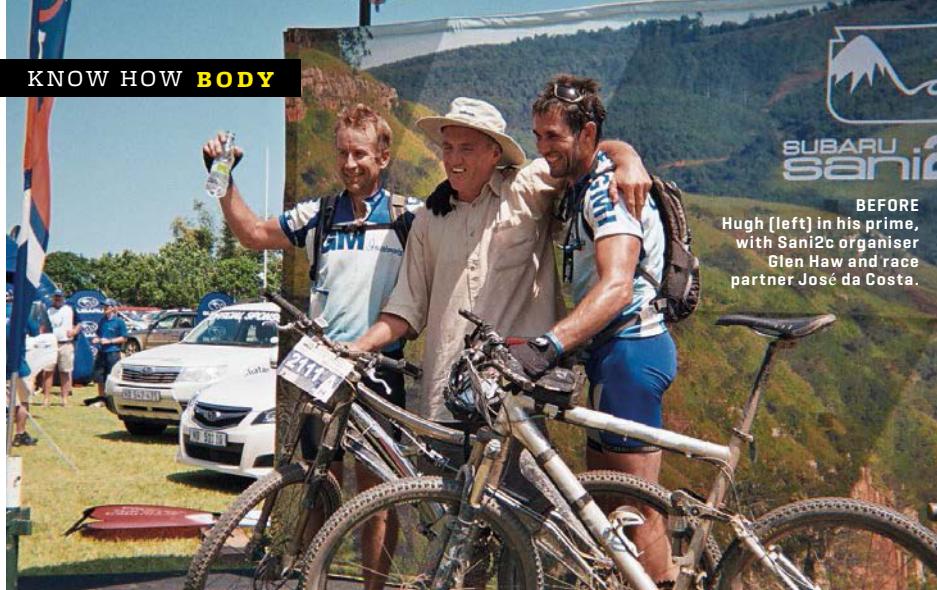
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BEFORE
Hugh (left) in his prime,
with Sani2c organiser
Glen Haw and race
partner José da Costa.

gear can ride up while you're cycling, and then the lower back (just above your shorts) is exposed."

We have not given up hope that we will get the cancer under control, and then work at overcoming the paralysis, so we can get him back on his bicycle again. My husband has amazing determination and a sense of humour to match, so he won't give up... a true mountain biker never does! We will hang in there until we get to the top. As Farmer Glen says, "Life is not all downhill."

My husband has always said he wouldn't want anyone to go through this; and that's why I've been motivated to share his story. As MTB riders, especially doing stage events, you are exposed to the elements for hours on end; I urge you to use the protection you need, and apply sunscreen more than once in a race. You also need to get your skin checked regularly. Check-ups might cost you a lot, but if you don't... you have a lot more to lose.

Dr Allem advocates the use of sunscreen, and a good skincare routine that includes pre-, post- and in-ride treatment. Use a high-SPF sunscreen, re-apply during rides if they are longer than

two hours, and replenish your skin after rides. "You must make sure you give your skin all the things it needs to repair any damage that has occurred during the day, and assist it with further protection." Allem prescribes a good retinol cream for post-ride treatment, or for when you're not riding, to encourage continual skin-cell turnover and skin rejuvenation. "This will also promote skin healing and faster recovery; it's anti-ageing, and reduces sun damage."

May is Melanoma Awareness Month, and for that reason, a friend and I will be riding the Sani2C Trail – for my husband, and to raise awareness about melanoma among all our fellow MTB riders out there. Look out for us on the trails!



AFTER
Hugh with wife Kath, earlier this year.
Still upbeat, despite the cancer setbacks.

ORAL SUPPLEMENTATION FOR DUMMIES

Don't know about you, but we were stumped by oral supplementation: How does it work? What should you take? To help you on your way, here are some of the leading oral supplements, as suggested by skinrenewal.co.za

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heliocare.com

NUTRACEUTICALS

Nutraceuticals are products derived from food sources that provide extra health benefits, in addition to the basic nutritional value found in foods.

healthrenewal.co.za/nutraceuticals



MELANOMA IDENTIFICATION 101

The key features to look out for when diagnosing a melanoma are summarised by the 'ABCDE' criteria: A for Asymmetry (a mole that changes to become asymmetrical); B for Border (the border of the mole becomes irregular); C for Colour (a mole with many colours, especially if they include black, blue, grey or red); D for Diameter (initially, lesions with a diameter larger than 0.6mm were considered worrisome; we now know that melanomas may be smaller than 0.6mm, and larger lesions are not necessarily melanomas); and E for Evolution (changes in size or appearance). A mole that bleeds constantly is also a danger sign. – Dr Suretha Kannenberg



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9 QUESTIONS

Interview by
Jonathan Ancer

MANX MARK CAVENDISH MISSILE

Mark Cavendish – aka the Manx Missile, and the fastest man on two wheels – was in South Africa to add the Cape Town Cycle Tour to his impressive list of achievements. But the man with 25 Tour de France stage wins was outfoxed, outsmarted and outsprinted by local rider Nolan Hoffman. Cavendish, 2011 Road World Champion, hails from the Isle of Man, where they believe in fairies; *Bicycling* caught up for an exclusive one-on-one with the Etixx – Quick-Step rider, to find out what he thinks of the ‘little people’ – and Cape Town drivers.

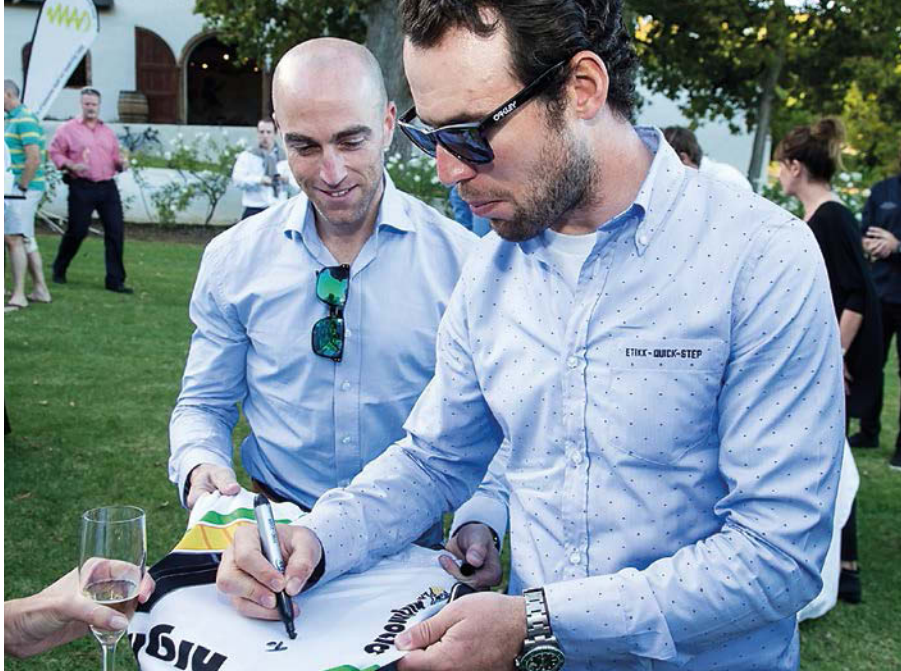
EWALD SADIE



9 QUESTIONS

Interview by
Jonathan Ancer

THE SIGNATOR
During his stay in Cape Town, Cavendish did some serious autographing workouts



1 MARK, DO YOU BELIEVE IN FAIRIES?

Depends what fairies you're talking about. If you mean the Isle of Man ones, I always say hello to them ones when I cross the bridge. I say "*Moghrey mie Vooijer Veggey*" [Manx for "Good morning, little people"]. That's the truth.

2 YOU SMASHED 101KM/H ON THE ISLE OF MAN TT COURSE; BUT WHAT'S THE FASTEST SPEED YOU'VE EVER CLOCKED ON A BICYCLE?

It was 123km/h on the Tour de Suisse in 2009. The fastest that day was [Fabian] Cancellara, who did about 134km/h on the same descent. Most of the peloton was doing 120.

3 WHAT GOES THROUGH YOUR MIND WHEN YOU HIT THAT SPEED?

Who can I go behind to get even faster? It gets a bit crazy, sometimes.

4 IS YOUR ADVANTAGE OVER YOUR OPPONENTS MORE MENTAL OR PHYSICAL?

Absolutely mental. Look at

me, does it look physical? I'm racing against guys who are six foot [1.83m]. It's like Rocky versus Ivan Drago sometimes. I don't know what gives me the mental edge. I just prepare. I learn the course. I learn the race. I know what all the teams are doing, and I know what my team does. It's like playing a logical game.

5 WHAT'S BEEN YOUR BEST MOMENT ON A BIKE?

I've had some incredible moments – incredible wins, and beautiful experiences; but winning the World Championships on the road was pretty special. I've won a couple of times on the track before, but getting the solid rainbow band was incredible.

6 AND YOUR WORST MOMENT ON A BIKE?

I've had some bad times on the bike as well, but crashing at the Tour de France [in 2014] was one of my low points for sure.

7 CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT A ROUTE YOU'VE RIDDEN IN CAPE TOWN?

We started in Tokai and then went straight down to the beach; and then along the beach road to Stellenbosch. There are some beautiful places, but I saw some poverty – it was eye-opening. Absolutely beautiful country, but windy as anything. It was difficult with the traffic – you don't get much respect from some drivers. A few people recognised me. Some beeped when they saw me, some waved, some stopped us and wanted a photo... and some pulled the middle finger.

8 YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF FANS, BUT YOU'VE ALSO MADE A FAIR FEW FOES. WHAT DO YOU SAY TO YOUR CRITICS?

Who are me foes? If someone's so shallow as to comment on my personality when they don't know me, then is it worth caring about what they think? I don't think it is. If there's someone who's close to me, or someone I've really upset – not just bitter or jealous –

then, yeah, I'll try to rectify it. If someone doesn't know me and judges me, it's not worth caring what they think.

9 ANY ADVICE FOR OTHER CYCLISTS, ON GOING FAST?

Train more. To get the best out of yourself – not just in cycling, but anything in life – you've got to work. The harder you work, the luckier you get. It's a good rule to live by. **B**

NOW LISTEN TO BICYCLING'S EXCLUSIVE PODCAST WITH CAVENDISH, and find out what he thinks makes him so successful, what his cycling superstitions are, what he would have become if he wasn't a cyclist, what he does off the bike... and what he thinks about Cape Town naming a mall after him: Cavendish Square.
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Africa Is Rising

THERE'S A BUZZ ABOUT AFRICA IN THE CYCLING WORLD AT THE MOMENT – AND IT'S ABOUT MORE THAN MTN-QHUBEKA.

O

N A FRIDAY NIGHT AT KLEIN CONSTANTIA, JUST A FEW DAYS BEFORE THE CAPE TOWN CYCLE TOUR, THEY

RAISED R500 000 FOR THE MAD CHARITY, WHICH IS FAR FROM BEING MAD.

R200k of that, a friend joked, was for two bottles of Vin de Constance, the estate's signature wine. They threw in Mark Cavendish's Specialized Venge for free with the wine, he said. Hans Astrom, Swedish-born managing director of Klein Constantia, put two dummy

“*Bonaparte had 1 126 litres of Constantia wine sent over to him...*”

bottles of Vin de Constance in the bike's bottle cages in the build-up to the Cycle Tour. Visitors loved the look, and posed for pictures with it. What are the odds they'll design plastic *bidons* in the shape of Vin de Constance bottles for the Tour de France – in which Etixx – Quick-Step will sport the Klein Constantia logo on their jerseys?

Vin de Constance is legendary. The story goes that on his deathbed, in exile on St Helena, Napoleon Bonaparte refused to let anything

pass his lips save for the sweet South African dessert wine made from vine-dried Muscat de Frontignan grapes. Bonaparte had 1 126 litres of Constantia wine sent over to him every year for the seven years he was on the island. That's a lot of wine. He must have died a happy man.

At a sit-down with media on that same Friday before the Cycle Tour, Mark Cavendish didn't look taken aback in the slightest to find that the SA media were quaffing wine as they prepared to talk to him. Astrom, a man who recognises a thirsty bunch when he sees one, had sent a couple of bottles over. Not long after, he had to send some more. Soon, the hacks were knocking back Napoleonic amounts of Constantia's finest. We poured some for Etixx – Quick-Step's PR person too. Beside us, the team's Belgian contingent were also drinking wine. It seemed the right thing to do.

Cavendish has a reputation as a tricky interview, but that's a bit harsh. He thinks before he answers, waiting till he knows what he's going to say, instead of letting words tumble forth just to fill the silence. We spoke of what he knew about the Cycle Tour (“It starts very early.”), Cape Town drivers (“Some drivers aren't great. It's not cyclists against drivers; you're always going to get the odd dickhead anyway. There's the odd dickhead on a bike, too.”), his desperately close win over Heinrich Haussler at Milan-San Remo 2009 (“I just

didn't give up. A lot of riders go out to beat other riders, and they're scared of failing. They're scared to push everything and fail.”), and why he switched from a 52cm Venge to a 49cm (“Because they didn't make a 49 when the Venge first came out – simple as that.”).

He was asked about his relationship with Gary Blem, the South African mechanic who worked with him at HighRoad and Sky: “For me...” he turns to the team PR and smiles: “I shouldn't say this. Don't tell Kenny [*his current mechanic*] I said this – but Gary's the best mechanic on the World Tour. I love him to bits. We still stay in contact, we still message each other. He just lives for the sport. To him it's not just a job – it's not even a lifestyle – and it's his whole love. You see that in his work. He's always looking to improve things. He's a superb guy. I'm not just saying that, but he is. I know. He's not just a great mechanic, he's a great man.”

The presser broke up; Cavendish smiled at us from behind his Oakley Frogskins, and then walked into the growing crowd for the charity function. We watched as he moved through the crowd like he was spearing through the bunch on the way to the front in the final sprint. At the Tour de France he will ride with a South African wine estate on his jersey. As a wise man once said about international cycling: “Africa is rising.”

Indeed it is. **B**

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RIDES ARE THOSE THAT DON'T HAVE A FINISH LINE.

MY BROTHER AND I

Kath Fourie, 33, Conservationist

Somewhere on a steep hillside in Switzerland, I'm breathing heavily into my helmet while my goggles mist up. I'm at Chatel Bike Park, after spending a full week out of my two-and-a-half-week trip to Europe in bed with a superbug I picked up from a cashier at the local Carrefour grocery store. After shelling out 100 Euros to see the doctor and get antibiotics (and maybe having a desperate little cry in the waiting room), I am determined to make the most of my last few days in Morzine.

I've been dabbling in downhill riding since 2012, and was fortunate to have visited Morzine six months after I started. Now, though, as I'm consciously breathing in and out through my newly-cleared nasal passages, it's August 2014. A lot of good things and bad things had happened between my two trips. I'd changed jobs, my partner Millar had moved to KZN from Gauteng, we'd bought a house, I was halfway through a part-time Masters degree; and my brother had passed away, leaving me feeling completely unsure about almost everything.

Shortly after my brother was diagnosed with cancer I went to visit him in the UK. He had just bought a bicycle, a Cube hardtail 29er (to my chagrin), and he hadn't yet ridden it when he found out that the extreme back pain he was experiencing was due not to torn muscles, but to stage-four pancreatic cancer. He took me to the garage to show me his bike and leaned against the doorframe as I looked it over, oohing and aahing, while my heart broke inside for my poor, cheated 32-year-old brother.

"Ja, I haven't even ridden it yet. It really sucks," he said to me, as his mouth softened and his eyes filled with

tears. I stood up quickly and said, "Yes it does. But no point dwelling on it; let's go and make tea."

That story may be a little tear-jerking in nature, but something else happened during that conversation. Reflecting on it after Tristan passed away, I took the fact that he'd been robbed of a lifetime of riding experiences seriously. I swore to myself that I'd stop being over-cautious and self-deprecating about my riding; and that I'd stop stressing about racing and concentrate on having fun. I would goddamn learn to jump doubles and stop feeling envious of all the boys, and I would let Tristan enjoy these things

"I would goddamn learn to jump doubles and stop feeling envious of all the boys, and I would let Tristan enjoy these things through me – from wherever he now was."

through me – from wherever he now was. E. E. Cummings has a poem that ends "in my heart (I carry your heart)", and that's where my brother remains young, riding his bike, having a good time with me.

Since then, my riding has grown and

flourished; I got better. I made plans, built things, put my energy into positive thinking, and one day I cleared a three-metre double; then a six-metre double, an eight-metre double – and on the hillside in Switzerland, I'm gearing up to follow Millar over the Chatel Canyon Gap. My brain is going "Uh, no", and my heart is going "I am so gonna jump that big gaping hole filled with rocks and a broken cement pipe!" It's eight to 10 metres long, and probably one of the most noticeable features at the park, as the lifts swing by right over it. Millar has suggested I follow him, after watching about 40 guys effortlessly sailing over it, whooping with delight. We discuss it tactically; choose a point of commitment (a spot on the track where I'll decide I am or am not committing to going ahead), and push our bikes up to the top of the trail.

I wipe my goggles, blink up at the sky and remember that it's all about fun; then pull them over my helmet and follow Millar in. My heart is pumping, full speed ahead, and my eyes lock in on the other side of the gap. "Do not touch your brakes," I say to myself, and the next thing I'm on the other side, whooping like a cowgirl and hugging Millar. "Ha, I really didn't think



you were going to do that one – I thought you'd psyched yourself out!" I laugh, and we trundle off down the trail. But just before we go, it's become my habit to look over my shoulder, to check if Tristan's watching. I don't know why I do that, silly I guess. But I smile anyway, and I feel he's pleased.



MY BEST FRIEND

Yolandi Du Toit, 29, Pro Cyclist

It took me half a day to realise that I don't necessarily have one amazing ride, but a collection of them.

My parents were the first in my family to take up cycling, and as I loved being active and outdoors, I soon joined in on the fun with my mountain bike. I was only 12 at the time, and my bike was mainly used as transport between home and school.

Later, during my teenage years, my bicycle became my way to travel, discovering nearby towns and quenching my sense of adventure. I would get home from school, jump straight on my bicycle and start exploring. At 4:30pm sharp I'd be back home to meet up with my dad, all kitted up and ready to ride after his day at work.

This was the highlight of my day, especially as it was simply impossible for Francois du Toit to 'just ride' for hours on end. It would bore him to death. My dad would always have something exciting planned for training; and true to the saying 'like father, like daughter', I would follow eagerly.

Ever since I can remember, the two of us would perform these three-kay hill intervals on a weekly basis. When I visit my dad now, I realise the hill is actually only a drag on Jason Street in Riebeeckstad. Back then it might as well have been Mount Everest!

We would start our interval together at the bottom of the drag, and I would try my utmost to stay with my dad for as long as possible. Every year I managed to keep up with him a little longer, until eventually I could stay on his wheel until we reached the top. My dad would be so proud of me for hanging on, and I would be so happy I was able to keep up with my hero. Not only did we motivate each other during our 'drag-interval' sessions, we always had a friendly rivalry while chasing each other. Whether it was around the Phakisa race track on Tuesday evenings or during the local weekend races, there would always be a race within a race.

My dad's a very energetic person, and it brings him great joy to see people around him smiling and laughing – even if sometimes it comes at his expense. For this reason training never felt like exercise; more like playing around on my bike, alongside my favourite training partner.

Through riding together we formed a very special bond. My dad became my best friend, one with whom I could share my joy, laughter, pain and tears while pedalling away with youthful abandon. To this day I cherish the moments we spent together on our bikes.

So the ride of my life is in fact an accumulation of rides, in the company of my father. Those really *were* the days.

“ My dad became my best friend, one with whom I could share my joy, laughter, pain and tears while pedalling away with youthful abandon.”



LONELY PLANET

Ron Rutland, 41, Intrepid Explorer

It's incredible what happens when you actually allow yourself to follow your dreams, to commit absolutely and wholeheartedly to living a life that, in the deepest places of your being, you know to be the life 'meant' for you.

For me, this dream was to explore Africa by bicycle.

In addition, the last 21 months spent cycling some 30 000km through 55 countries in Africa and southern Europe has confirmed one thing I strongly suspected: there is no better way to explore a country or continent than by bicycle... and that 99.9% of humans are amazing; the rest make the news. But one of my fondest memories from the past (almost) two years has to be this one.

I was entering central eastern Angola from Zambia, where the Zambezi flows due south, after a number of blissful weeks following the magical river northwards. Lettie (my bike) and I found ourselves in a completely foreign place, in every sense of the word. Having only been on the road for three months at that stage, and despite the growing strength and confidence that this experience had brought, it was with a mixed sense of excitement and trepidation that I made the first few pedal strokes into Angola, as it was the first country on my expedition that I had never visited before (and, as it turned out, it was – and still is – the only country I cycled in which I didn't see one cellphone tower or one centimetre of tar road).

Arriving in the late afternoon, just as the border was about to close, I was met by Enano, the sole Angolan immigration-cum-customs-cum-security officer on duty. After the relatively painless bureaucratic entry procedures were completed, Enano informed me I was the first white man he had ever seen on a bicycle; and he asked me in broken English where I planned to sleep that night, to which I replied, "In my tent, as normal."

Well, Enano was going to have none of that, and within minutes he'd shut the office for the day and had me cycling for all my worth, following behind him on his somewhat dated motorcycle for two or three kilometres down a sandy dust track, to what turned out to be his home. I didn't have time to catch my breath before Enano was drawing water from the local well, heating it in a fire-powered geyser, and I found myself enjoying one of the most memorable 'showers' of my life. Dinner of kapenta with sadza and in-depth conversations on the state of the Angolan nation followed, before I made camp on the floor of his modest, yet indescribably warm home; and one of the greatest days of my life on a bicycle came to a close.

“ There is no better way to explore a country or continent than by bicycle... and 99.9% of humans are amazing; the rest make the news.



HIGH RIDING

Nic White, 40-something, Directeur Sportif of EuropcarSA

I've been a pro rider for some time; for pros, racing is about pushing yourself physically, making the right moves tactically, and striving for a result. Which, in turn, justifies why you're doing it. But somewhere along the line, you lose the real reason you started riding a bicycle in the first place.

In the beginning you ride for the sheer joy of pedalling a bike, and going somewhere, to some place or destination, under your own steam. That was the initial attraction of cycling for me. To have the freedom of choice and ability to go to places on my own.

Once ability is established, racing is the next logical step, and with that comes all the competitiveness around cycling. Somehow the initial attraction is

“...the old, new-found joy of taking a bike to a destination, and enjoying the wonderful sights along the way.”

forgotten; and at some point, you need a ride that will refresh that original feeling of (and reason for) riding a bike.

In 2005 I did a ride though Lesotho. Up Sani Pass, across one of the country's highest roads, then descending to the Free State town of Fouriesburg. It took us a few days, but the highlight of this was the fact that we got to witness a fantastically rugged landscape, high altitude, extreme weather, and the old, new-found joy of taking a bike from a place to a destination, and enjoying the wonderful sights along the way. It was just so foreign, compared to everyday biking, where all you do is try to improve your condition and results.

There was no hurry, no need to race or get anywhere fast. Just the need to move, and to get to the destination eventually, with some fun and enjoyment of the environment along the way. Stopping to take it in and take a photo, to breathe in the freshness of the place. I found a place to ride a bicycle that brought about a change of mindset; it inspired me, gave me reason to ride my bike – and reminded me why I wanted to.

I've gone back many times to the mountain kingdom of Lesotho, and every time I'm reminded

of how stark and beautiful the rugged landscape is. The attraction to the mountains and high altitude is still there for me, and I'm sure it always will be. I love to share that joy and sense of adventure with people; to give them the chance to taste what I have, and experience that escape into the environment.

Every chance I get, I try to experience a little more of that feeling. Even if it's just a little ride to a small back road or track on the outskirts of the city. I just have to remember: to take a breath, stop and take a picture, and enjoy what our country has to offer – and all from a bicycle.

(CHILDHOOD MEMORIES)

Craig McKune, 35, Investigative Reporter

A long straight strip of tarmac pushed apart the otherwise endless stands of fragrant fynbos and tall eucalyptus and pine trees. The surface was rough, making the going a little hard, and I could see the white centre line, sometimes broken, sometimes not, rising and dipping as it raced along the R43 from Hermanus to Stanford, one coastal holiday town to another.

Because it was early in the day, the air was cool in our lungs, and there were few cars out. My dad and I were relaxed as we pedalled away from town, turned at the 20km marker, and rode back to the thatched beach-holiday cottage, where breakfast and the intermingling scents of sunscreen, watermelon and hydrangea flowers awaited.

My most memorable ride was no more exciting than that.

I was 11 or 12 at the time, and I had a brand-new mountain bike. I had ridden a blue BMX up to that point, tearing up the lower Tokai forest every day after school. But when one of the neighbourhood kids was given a 21-speed LeJeune mountain bike, the rest of us couldn't keep up, so the neighbourhood parents had a riot on their hands.

I used to buy bike magazines from the kilo store and enter the competitions to win mountain bikes, not realising that the international mags were already months old and too many kilometres away to take my posted entreaties seriously.

I don't think it was very easy for my parents to cough up, but my dad's passionate about bikes himself.

He'd built his own road bikes, welding the frames,

filing and finishing them, airbrushing, truing wheels and branding the down tube: 'Pat McKune'. He rode some of the first Argus cycle tours in the early eighties – and, he proudly tells me, finished within minutes of the winners.

So I eventually got my bike. Not the overpriced 21-speed Diamondback Topanga I'd aimed for; but there were three rings up front, and a cluster of seven at the back. The spec, my dad convinced me, was just as good as that of the Topanga.

Rigid fork, obviously (this was about 1991). Cantilever brakes. Knobbles. Way too big for me.

The brand was 'Citibike'. The frame was black, flecked with white paint, and heavy. Its geometry was odd: the downtube ran straight from the headtube to the rear hub, leaving a funny triangle attaching the bottom bracket to the rest. I'm not sure why.

But it was perfect, I thought. The neighbourhood ripping and stump-jumping was quickly pushed up several notches.

And it was on this brand-new steed that I set out with my dad for the first time on the R43 road rides.

There, he taught me the ropes, and his words still ring in my ears today when I ride on the road: how to ride carefully in another cyclist's draft, to always watch over my shoulder for cars,

“...it was perfect, I thought. The neighbourhood ripping and stump-jumping was quickly pushed up several notches.

to keep a safe distance from the verge, to hold a steady course wide of parked cars – and spin, always spin over 80 or 90rpm or you'll damage your knees, he said.

Back at the house, after breakfast, I would jump straight back on my bike and tear up and down the town's coastal pedestrian paths on my own, exploring greenbelts, learning to wheelie and jump.

Perfect days.

RAISING AWARENESS

Cherise Stander, 25, Pro Cyclist

Every athlete goes through a defining moment in their life, in which they have to make a decision: to try and continue their careers as professional athletes, or admit the time has come to put the bike away and move on to another opportunity.

After a really difficult time on my bike, I thought this time had come for me. Then I was invited to do a ride with the Pedal Power Association, aimed at creating awareness around cycling safety for cyclists and drivers, and to get as many people as possible to sign the 1.5-metre safety-gap petition.

We started the ride from Cycle Lab in Fourways, Johannesburg, and I had to leave the ride in Bloemfontein in the Free State. But I got to ride with some really incredible people, who wanted nothing more than to make a difference and get motorists to respect cyclists on the road.

All of the cyclists I was with had one thing in common – they loved riding their bikes. We rode for anywhere between four and six hours a day, and not once did anyone complain. Every night was spent sitting around, talking about the day's adventures.

And the more time I spent with people who loved being on their bikes, the more I loved being on mine. For the first time in a while, I felt comfortable being out on the road again – I could share some of my racing stories, and even got to educate other cyclists on the importance of road safety and abiding by the law.

When we weren't riding our bikes we got to interact with local communities and educate them on why we were on such a 'mission'.

At some point in that week I realised just how amazingly lucky and blessed I am to be in the position that I'm able to make cycling my career. While regular nine-to-fivers were sitting in their offices, I was out on my bike, in nature, breathing fresh air and looking at some truly beautiful scenery.

I made a decision during that week: that I was not done with cycling. That I was going to get fit again,

“The more time I spent with other people who loved being on their bikes, the more I loved being on mine.”



EVERY RIDE

Gary Perkin, 44, Photographer

I've been fortunate enough to ride in an amazing variety of places – from A to Z, basically, from Arizona to (New) Zealand. But I feel it's impossible to state definitively that one ride is superior to another.

You see, I feel that each ride is very subjective – according to your mood, the company you're in, the location, the weather, and many other minutiae that define what stands out in your memory when you look back and try to describe your experience.

Let's start at the beginning. I learned to ride when I was nine or so; and I can still remember the moment my dad let go the saddle, and I wobbled my way across the open fields of Hutten Park in Newcastle, Northern Natal. Vividly. That first ride (and many subsequent rides) on my royal-blue, big-wheeled Western Flyer changed my life, and opened up a whole new world of exploration and friendships.

Flash forward some 15 years to 1994, when I climbed aboard my first mountain bike – a royal-blue Cannondale – and achieved a similar sense of freedom and the urge to explore in the hills above Cannes, France. That was another good ride that sticks with me to this day.

And since those early days in France my mountain bikes have taken me to many places around the world, and each one has produced stories, thrills, spills, and new friendships.

Like the time I rode with my mate Mike Smith in Scotland, and we truly experienced that saying about 'four

and get back to the racing scene.

At the end of the tour, when the other riders eventually reached Cape Town, they handed over all the signatures that we'd gathered along the way to the MEC of Transport.

A couple of months later the one-metre law was introduced in the Western Cape. It was a small victory for all of us who'd participated in this amazing tour. It may not change lives immediately, or directly, and we as cyclists still have a long way to go to get the respect we deserve on the road; but you eat an elephant one bite at a time.

So in a way, that week changed my life; and I'd like to believe it changed other cyclists' lives as well; and that we did make a difference, and got motorists to pay just a little bit more attention when they see cyclists out on the road.

“ Like my dad did for me, I let go my daughter Molly's saddle when she was two and a half years old, and watched her pedal off down our street to start her own adventures on two wheels.



seasons in one day' – from sunshine, to hail, to snow, and then driving wind. We huddled under trees, we crawled along next to dry-stone walls, and when we got back to the house we were soaked to the bone. And later, over our steak pie dinner, we just laughed at why we'd even gone out in the first place – but we were so glad we had.

Or that time between World Cups in Europe when a bunch of us went to Lago di Garda in Italy. By bike, we had to take two gondolas up to 1800m, then descend 500m and climb back up to 2080m above sea level. And then plummet the 2000m vertical descent to the azure lake below. Only problem was, I had a loaner XC bike; all the others in our party had rides much more suited to the terrain. I remember cursing switchback turn after switchback turn towards the bottom of Altissimo, as my brakes boiled from the punishment they were receiving.

But when we eventually got to the lake, there was no moaning or grumbling – we just sat straight down to a slap-up four-course Italian meal, and watched the waves lap gently near our table as we reminisced about crashes, near-misses – and those switchbacks!

And then there was the time I went to New Zealand, and was absolutely blown away by how rad the mountain bikers were there. Yes, their trails are phenomenal; but more kindred spirits I have yet to meet. All of them shared their trails and stories with me; now, I want to go back every single time I see a fern at the side of trail.

Those examples are all amazing and exotic and magical, for sure; but what about the time I rode with my wife Karen and some new friends around the Amathole Mountains near Hogsback? We got lost, we got bogged down in hideous mud, we shared fresh, new trails together, and we had laughs long into the night – all the while under our own power, on the humble bicycle.

Or that last ride I did – you all know it, the one that you didn't really feel up to, but forced yourself to put your kit on and text a riding buddy (in my case, Tom) to meet up in 10 minutes, and just go and thrash out the day's problems on your pedals.

It's these rides that remind me why I love riding so much, and how it's defined my life to this point – and hopefully, will continue to for many years to come.

And finally: what about the time when, like my dad did for me, I let go my daughter Molly's saddle when she was two and a half years old, and watched her pedal off down our street to start her own adventures on two wheels.

NAILING THE NEMESIS

Dave Moseley, 34, Writer

If you live and mountain bike in the Western Cape, your technical skills improve at a rapid rate. Many of the trails are rocky or sandy, hilly or hilly, and always packed with roots waiting to trip you up just when you think you're barking up the right tree.

In winter, the trails are a mudfest; and the roots become even more of a slippery obstacle to navigate during rides. It goes without saying, then, that if you're a dedicated rider from the greater Cape Town area, your technical skills should be pretty sharp after a year or two on the bike.

That's certainly been my experience, and I recall fondly the moment I cycled through a rock garden without 'dabbing' for the first time – specifically the baboon-splattered one in Tokai, and the gnarly, narrow section at the top of Grabouw that's up-ended many a Wines2Whales rider.

But one technical challenge that took me forever to get right was nailing an A-frame gate at Oak Valley. I vaguely recall that they feature on some other Western Cape trails, but it's at Oak Valley that they're most prominent, and it's at Oak Valley that my greatest mountain-bike tussle – with one single bridge – took place.

Right from the start of the trail at Oak Valley, you're thrown into conflict with the 'A-frames'. There's a tiny one off the tar road that requires a sharp right-hand turn to get up and over. As the entry point onto the gate is higher than the rest of it, it's no great challenge; but it does set the scene for what's to come.

The trail zig-zags through some trees and a small stream – a flat, speedy warm-up for the trail proper, still to come. To get to mountain-biking heaven, though, you need to negotiate the trickiest A-frame on the farm.

At the end of the zippy single track it stands, tall and menacing – a silent, yet vicious sentry guarding the castle gates. To get up and over the gate, you need to negotiate a sharp left, and then put out of your mind the fact that there's only a short flat section on top, and then a steep drop into a puddle of mud (it's always muddy) on the other side.

The first time, I chickened out halfway up, stepped off my bike – and slid straight back down. My wife laughed. On another occasion I hit the ramp at pace, only to take my eyes off the prize

and ride straight into the side fencing on the top. My wife laughed again.

For a long time – a number of visits – I simply stopped and walked up and over the gate, while my wife waited impatiently on the other side.

But then something snapped. How could I call myself a mountain biker if I couldn't even subdue the first technical challenge on the Oak Valley trail?

On a quiet Saturday morning, I drove out to Oak Valley by myself, determined to succeed. I gave myself a pep talk in the car, in the parking lot, and as I sped towards my fate. "Just keep pedalling. Just keep pedalling," I repeated in my head.

Out of nowhere, similar to that gut-churning moment when it's your turn to deliver an oral in class, the A-frame appeared. It looked steeper, slicker and taller than ever before.

Bang. I hit the bottom of the gate at pace, and stopped pedalling and repeating my mantra at the same time. But I had enough momentum going in, and somehow teetered to the top before gliding over and down. Success!

Now I was a mountain biker. I'd conquered my greatest technical challenge (until that darn floating bridge at Joberg2c). For the rest of my ride that day, I soared through the trails on a cushion of confidence and exhilaration. For a mountain biker in training, there's no greater feeling than nailing a nemesis.

“I'd conquered my greatest technical challenge (until that darn floating bridge at Joberg2c).”



FAMILY TIES

Jason Lind, 35, Bike Shop Owner

On Boxing Day a few years ago, we went on a Lind boys' family ride. We all have our regular training rides, but it's not always easy to get the whole extended family together. And although it was just another ride in the week for me, it was a proper challenge for the group, as we'd put my father, Alfred, and youngest brother, Tim, on bikes, and optimistically taken them on an 80-kay ride, pushing and pulling them almost the entire way. My other brother, Greg – the manager of our Olympic Cycles franchise at the River Club in Cape Town – mostly cross-trains and kick-boxes to keep fit, but he can tough out any ride; he has an Ironman finish to his credit.

So we headed off from Blouberg towards Cape Town, and eventually to the top of Chapman's Peak. I always have to remind myself never to become complacent about the spectacular scenery and rides we are privileged to experience on any given day in Cape Town. This was one of those perfect days; and having my cousin-in-law, both my brothers and my father along for the ride made it extra-special. Luckily we had one of those super tailwinds back into Big Bay, which made the final straight that much easier.

Of course, there've been loads of other great rides in my life, including a few 'ace up' adventures on my own. Those stand out purely because it's always tough to motivate yourself to ride long.

But the really awesome, timeless rides are the ones shared with family and friends, when we do a unique ride as a group. I like trying to get a group together to do rides like this on special days – birthdays, public holidays... and now, even on New Year's Eve and Boxing Day. **B**

“This was one of those perfect days; and having my cousin-in-law, both my brothers and my father along for the ride made it extra-special.”

Actions speak louder than words



What's your perception of 1.5 meters? Is it from here to there or further away? 1.5 meters is the length of an average bicycle.

Longer than you thought? Next time you drive past a cyclist, err on the side of caution and give them an extra-wide berth, because...

cyclists stay alive at 1.5!



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THE RIDE OF YOUR LIFE

YOUR GREATEST RIDES

BICYCLING'S READERS LOOK BACK ON THE RIDES OF THEIR LIVES

Dr Jacques van Staden

The greatest ride I've ever done was the Changing Diabetes Cycle Relay. In 2012 and 2013 we rode from Joburg to George, and in 2014 we rode from Joburg to Cape Town in three days. It's a relay format on road bikes, with 16 riders (four per team) swapping every 100 or 110km, and it's all in aid of underprivileged children living with Type 1 Diabetes. It was tough – the sleep deprivation, the late-night shifts on the bike – but it was worth every breath and every drop of sweat, for a very special cause.

Chris Snooke

The Bolivian Death Road in South America has to be my greatest ride. It's five hours of downhill, starting at about 4 000m above sea level in snowcapped mountains, and ending up in the jungle at the end. At the time, I didn't realise it; but that was the moment I realised how much I loved cycling. I bought my first MTB later that year, and have been hooked ever since.

Gary Hutch Jr III

I cycled my mountain bike, unsupported, East to West across the USA. In short, it was life-changing for me.

Marié Jansen


I rode my bicycle from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth and back. I went there on Route 62 and returned via the Garden Route/N2/R44. The best holiday I ever had, and a perfect way to celebrate turning 50.

Craig Northam

Cycling (unsupported) from Cairo to Cape Town, with fellow South African Simon Alston. It took me out of my comfort zone, and helped us to see just how vast the African continent is; and how amazing its varied people are, too! **B**



Hard Pack	Loose Soil
Loose Over Hard	Wet
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Rolling Resistance	Cornering Efficiency
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UNDER THE SUN There's nowhere to hide as riders tackle the brutal heat, energy-sapping distances and rough terrain of the Trans Hajar.

DESERT RATS

Bicycling contributor and pro mountain biker **Renay Groustra** recently traded in his regular trails and training regime for the opportunity to race the Trans Hajar in Oman. He survived lifts from the army, steep climbs and steeper descents, and sharing the road with a caravan of camels.

PHOTOGRAPHY MARK LLOYD



In January this year, most of South Africa's best MTB pros, as well as many top internationals, lined up for the first round of the Ashburton National Marathon Series at Meerendal Wine Estate. A home event; you would've expected me to be on the start line too – but instead I was halfway around the globe, on a slightly different start line: that of the Trans Hajar stage race, in Oman.

Different, because – after we'd been loaded into Omani Army buses at first light, and had survived a 90-minute journey over gravel-road passes in the Arabian mountain range – this start line was at 2 500m altitude, on top of a mountain called Jebel Kwar. Slightly different to the Cape Winelands!

You might be asking yourself: "What on earth?" Don't worry – so was I!



THIS PAGE: Insane gradient – Omani roadbuilders aren't constrained by petty regulations. **OPPOSITE TOP:** Everyone loves a man (or six) in uniform. **OPPOSITE MIDDLE:** The sharp end – Camelbak-endangering race equipment. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM:** Chilling out at the end of a hard day. Harem not pictured.



In 2015, Oman's Trans Hajar five-day mountain-bike stage race attracted 75 riders from surrounding countries and further afield, all eager for a bit of stage-race glory.

For some, it was a perfect opportunity to get in some much-needed Cape Epic training, which can be rather difficult in Arabia; for others, it was a first attempt at a multi-day event. With a field made up mostly of ex-pats, including many South Africans, there was certainly a feeling of solidarity – as we stood together on top of a mountain, in the middle of absolutely nowhere!

With the 40km individual prologue making up Day 1, the real racing began on Stage 2 – which featured a 15km neutralised downhill start, in order to reduce risk and enable us to take in the spectacular scenery at a slightly more relaxed pace.

Despite this, the first casualty was claimed within the first few kays of downhill, when Britain's Matthew Page experienced brake failure and had to dismount at 30km/h! It was a long walk down the hill for the Brit, but thankfully he escaped with only a few roasts, and was able to continue (once his brakes had cooled down) and finish the 127km stage.

In the lead group we found strength in numbers on the flat section, and after surviving some testing terrain it came down to a sprint finish; which resulted in three Saffers on the podium: James Reid, Max Knox and Andrew Hill, who had all also made the trip out to Oman.

Now in its fifth year, the Trans Hajar has found itself a new home three hours outside of Muscat. Once the Omani military had been recruited, it didn't take much to convince them to bust out their fancy demolition toys, which resulted in a football-pitch-sized piece of land being completely levelled to create the perfect race venue, albeit a little dusty. Nothing is too big a task in the Middle East!

What was great about this event was its rurality; all competitors stayed at a race village, where everything from tents, food, bike wash, mechanical servicing, ablutions, massages and chill-out areas were catered for by Oman Sail, the event organisers, who really went out of their way to make sure we were comfortable out in the Arabian wilderness. This created an exceptionally friendly, comfortable and festive atmosphere, which made the event extremely pleasurable,

THEY WHAT?!

THINGS I DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT OMAN

1. Despite having lots of sand, they also have lots of really high mountains, which the pre-race pictures didn't quite do justice to. I found this out the hard way – and during the whole event, we didn't ride through sand once.

2. The rural areas of Oman are sparsely populated: remote, widely scattered villages of cattle-herding communities, most of whom have never seen Westerners and have very little knowledge of the outside world.

3. Oman gets its drinking water from the sea via desalination plants; and as a result, actually has a water surplus.

4. Oman has hundreds of kilometres of beautiful coastline, allowing amazing beach-camping opportunities in winter. Probably one of its best-kept secrets.

5. They have amazing flatbread, which is served at every meal – and was most certainly my downfall!

6. Muscat has some incredible architecture in the old city. It's well worth checking out.



despite the harsh conditions.

The third stage wasn't without excitement. I completely surprised myself: after having had a rather rubbish first two days, for various uncontrollable reasons, and after another 90-minute crack-of-dawn bus transfer to our start line, I proceeded to fly up the first climb (which was a rather long 15km, and took us 53 minutes to summit).

This time only James Reid could follow, and on this shorter, 64km stage, things were looking good for a podium. Unfortunately my hopes were dashed (or should I say, slashed) when I pinch-flatted on a really rocky downhill, which ended that notion.

The excitement wasn't over, however. With five kays to go, I came across Andrew Hill standing at the side of the road at the bottom of a fast downhill section, his Enve (translation: 'very expensive') wheel folded completely in half, and looking rather sheepish. After I'd finished the stage a little later I found out he had collided full-tilt with a goat, who'd decided to test Andrew's last-minute reaction time. I kid you not! (Geddit?) Unfortunately for Andrew the crash was just too bad, and he had to withdraw from the race.



“NEVER IN MY LIFE HAVE I HAD TO GET BEHIND MY SEAT WHILE DESCENDING A TAR ROAD!”

The next morning we woke up to a stunning Arabian sunrise, and with all our bad luck (we hoped) and the remote starts out of the way, we could enjoy a stress-free morning before heading out onto the shortened Stage 4 leg.

Unfortunately only the first few kays of road were flat, which left us with a staggering 2 500m ascent to achieve in only 47km. The amazing thing over in Oman is that because it barely rains, they don't have to adhere to 'normal' road-building requirements and regulations. The tar-road climbs hit insane gradients: up to 20 or even 30 per cent.

Again, the lead group found strength in numbers climbing up the tar road to Jebel Shams, a 3 000m peak – the highest on the Arabian Peninsula. It was at the top of the 10km climb that once again James and I found ourselves off the front, nose bleeds and all, and working on building a bigger lead on the others.

Chasing back down that same tar-road climb, it was hard not to imagine the result of a brake or equipment failure while descending. Never in my life have I had to get behind my seat while descending a tar road! By the bottom of the descent my brake rotors were burned black (and still are). But James and I had managed to extend our lead; and with me setting the pace back over the last climb home, I was able to out-sprint the youngster for the line and take my first international race win ever. What a memory!

With one day left, I was now eight minutes off a podium spot.

PICK ME! WHERE DO I SIGN?

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

1. The capital of Oman is Muscat, which also has their largest airport: Muscat International.
2. Visas can be bought upon arrival, for \$14 US.
3. The quickest flightpath from South Africa is via Doha, which is a nine-hour flight, followed by a one-hour flight from Doha to Muscat.
4. The race organises shuttles directly from the airport to the race village, although you might want to arrive a day or two early to catch some rest before the race.
5. A dual-suspension is highly recommended. Some of the *wadis* (riverbeds) are really bumpy and loose, and there are mountainous sections with loose, sharp rock. A hardtail would also work, but might be a little bumpy at times! I rode a Cannondale Scalpel with fast-rolling tyres for the gravel-road and tar sections, and I didn't miss my hardtail on the steep tar-road climbs.
6. This year's entry package cost was R12 300 – transfers, race and meals included. Camping equipment is not supplied by the organisers but can be hired at an additional fee. Return flights will cost you about R7 000 if booked early enough.
7. For more info, visit www.transhajjar.com





TOP: Squint, and you could be in the Cape Winelands... sort of. **MIDDLE:** Exhaustion – the heat, the gradients and the technicals take their toll. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Palm trees = water – strangely, available in abundance in Oman. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** “Yes, I’ve just eaten your route markers – what ya gonna do about it?”



But I’ve learned a few things over the years of racing; one of them is that it’s not over till it’s over.

Other things, though, I was only just discovering at this point; and one of them was that although the Omani people are not your typical sporting nation, they just LOVE cycling. With the quiet road we were on not having been fully closed off for the race, we’d occasionally encounter the odd 4x4 – which usually resulted in vigorous hooting. In South Africa this is associated with aggression; but over the days, I began to realise that these people are actually incredibly warm and friendly – and absolutely sport-crazy. Bring on the hooting!

With all the big climbing out of the way, the final day saw the field doing a 100km circular route around our base-camp mountain and back. The route was 50 per cent tar, with roughly 1 500m of climbing; and again large groups formed, with riders finding strength in numbers once more.

At the Trans Hajar, we didn’t just have high mountains, heat, and dry conditions to negotiate (not to mention the other competitors); as you may remember from Andrew’s goat encounter, we had wildlife to contend with too. It’s an arid landscape, with very little vegetation. This makes grazing your animals pretty difficult; and much to our dismay the camels and goats found the pink paper route markers far too tasty to resist.

On one occasion, as we rode down one of the long main gravel roads, we encountered a caravan of camels (I had to Google that!), casually chewing on our route markers. Perturbed by a bunch of

skinny lads in Lycra approaching at speed, they quickly abandoned their mid-morning snack and proceeded to gallop down the road in front of us for a few hundred metres. It was pretty amusing stuff!

We needed the light relief; along the way we’d lost second-placed Max Knox to a puncture, as well as Tudor Oprea, the fourth-placed Romanian rider. And right at the end, to our disappointment – and only after putting our heads down and nailing the uphill tar-road finish – we found out that we’d taken a wrong turn somewhere along the route: each of the five leaders was handed a 15-minute penalty, which lost me the podium result I achieved on the final stage, as well as my hopes of moving up overall.

I told you it’s not over till it’s over!

Luckily, that didn’t change any of the general standings, so it was a comparatively easy pill to swallow.

To finish off our incredible experience, our final night was spent having a celebratory barbecue – where all the riders shared war stories, and strengthened the bonds made over the previous five days of adventure – followed by a movie, projected onto a screen under the Arabian night sky.

I left Muscat the following evening; after spending the day exploring a city which blends the old and the new so beautifully, as well as getting to know some of the locals better, I was definitely sad my trip had come to an end.

Next year’s Trans Hajar promises to be bigger and better, with another new location. For those keen for an adventure, the effort of getting there is well worth it – so put it on your calendar. It’s on mine. **B**



PERFE

Get your om on! Enlighten your
ride with the strength, flexibility, and
feel-good benefits of yoga

BY LEAH FLICKINGER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
WINNI WINTERMEYER



ECT Flow



Cyclist and yoga instructor Pat Bailey can frequently be found snapping selfies as she twists like a pretzel in surprising places, often with a bike. Those eye-catching poses have inspired a devoted and sizeable Instagram following – 70K and counting – and helped Bailey, who pedals her road, mountain, and cruiser bikes all over town, realise that yoga is a lot like cycling. “When you’re climbing slowly, breathing in that sweet pine air, and you’re focused on watching the trail and being on your bike,” she says, “that’s yoga.” Who knew the two had so much in common? Allow her to elaborate.

► **Most people think** that yoga is this esoteric thing. They associate it with being on your mat, and believe that it has to do with certain poses in a sequence, or flow.

► **Cyclists would be** surprised to learn that they are doing yoga on their bike. Being aware of your breath and what your body is doing is yoga. If you’re a cyclist, you’re already doing that.

► **I didn’t do traditional** yoga on a mat this morning, but I did it on my bike. On your bike you are aware that you have control over everything that happens there in that moment. You are in tune with the movement of your body and conscious of your breathing. It’s the same on a yoga mat.

► **Just like in the flow of** yoga, there is a rhythm in cycling, and when you find it the ride becomes very Zen.

ESSENTIAL YOGA FOR CYCLISTS



HEART OPENERS

Counteract a leaned-over riding posture and improve breathing capacity by opening your chest and lungs. These poses also improve back strength and flexibility.



Bridge / Lie on your back with your knees bent. Position your feet about 15cm away from your hips. Make sure that your feet are pointing straight ahead. On an inhale, press your feet into the floor and lift your pelvis as high as you comfortably can. Move your arms underneath your body and clasp your hands together between your feet. Hold for 30 to 60 seconds, breathing evenly. Slowly lower to start position, one vertebra at a time.



Camel / Kneel upright with your knees hip-distance apart. Press your shins and the top of your feet into the floor. Rest your hands on your lower back with your fingers pointing to the floor. Gently lean back. Beginners can hold this position. If you are comfortable here, reach down and hold on to each heel. Keep your head in a neutral position, or allow it to drop back. Hold for about 30 to 60 seconds. To release, bring your hands to the front of your hips. Inhale, lead with your heart, and lift your torso by pushing your hips down towards the floor. Your head should come up last.



Cat-Cow / Start on all fours, with your knees directly below your hips. Keep your wrists, elbows, and shoulders in line and perpendicular to the floor. Centre your head in a neutral position, eyes looking at the floor. As you exhale, round your spine towards the ceiling. Allow your head to drop towards the floor, but don’t force your chin to your chest (left). As you inhale, arch your lower back and allow your belly to sink towards the floor. Lift your head to look straight forward (right). Repeat several times.

“THE YOGA-CYCLING CONNECTION IS SEAMLESS. PRACTISING YOGA HELPS PREPARE YOUR BODY TO BE ON YOUR BIKE.”



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I think this is why we get back on our bikes over and over again. And of course, both yoga and cycling have a natural flow – easy parts and hard parts.

► **In yoga we have a *drishti***, which is a gazing point. It's similar on a bike because you always want to be looking ahead to where you are going. So you have a *drishti* focused on the trail or road in front of you.

► **I picked up my first** road bike about seven years ago. My first ride was around a local loop, which is about 40 kilometres, and I felt like I was riding in a postcard. Very quickly, as cycling does, it started to chip away at my belief barriers. That hill, which was huge when I'd just started, was getting easier.

► **I got hooked instantly.** A friend suggested I race. I thought I was too old. But I decided for my 40th birthday I would give myself a season of racing. I found a team and raced about 10 criteriums that year, and did pretty decently for a first-timer.

► **I would find myself** smiling the whole time. I felt like I was living. It's the adrenaline. It's the camaraderie. It's going fast on your bike. It's the skill of it. It's the challenge of doing it better the next time.

► **There's a little bit of** spirituality in the yoga that I practise. It means that you are offering your practice up

to someone or something. For me, it's a lifestyle, it's a way that I live. It's a toolbox, a set of rules and guidelines for how I live my life.

► **Almost every day**, I do a little bit of meditation. Sometimes it's really active, sometimes it's a little bit less active, when I'm just taking a minute to pause and to think about my breath and be in the moment.

► **The side benefit of** yoga is that you stay in shape, and your body looks great, and you have lots of flexibility and open hips. Yoga helps me be more open and more flexible off the bike. But the number-one thing that I love is the core work. A strong midsection helps with bike handling.

► **The yoga-cycling** connection is seamless in my mind. Practising yoga helps prepare your body to be on your bike, and it's also especially important for recovery and undoing everything that the bike does. We are hunched over, we're pedalling, so our hips are really tight, the hamstrings are tight, quads are tight, everything is tightened up. Yoga gives you the ability or the reason to undo that.

► **A lot of yoga is a frame** of mind, a euphoria. Yogis believe in getting rid of all the distractions outside and looking within and focusing on their breath and their bodies to arrive at a place of enlightenment. I feel like you get that on the bike too. **B**

ESSENTIAL YOGA FOR CYCLISTS



HIP OPENERS

Prevent knee and leg pain by loosening your hip muscles, which can become tight after a lot of time in the saddle.



Pigeon / Start on all fours. Slide your right knee forward towards your right hand, then angle it at two o'clock. Next, slide your left leg back as far as your hips will allow. Keep your hips square to the floor (in other words, don't let them twist). If you're not feeling a deep stretch in your right glute, slide the right foot forward little by little towards your left hand. Walk your hands forward over your right leg. If you are not comfortable extending that far down, hold the pose with your arms or forearms on your mat or the floor in front of you, and let your hips sink forward and down. To get full release in the hips, breathe and release the belly. Stay in this position anywhere from 10 breaths to five minutes.



Hero-Reclining Hero / Kneel with your thighs perpendicular to the floor and the top of your feet facing down. Bring your knees together and slide your feet apart so they are on each side of your hips. Press the top of your feet evenly into your mat or the floor. Slowly sit down between your feet. Use your hands to turn the top of your thighs inward (left). Lean back onto your forearms and slowly lower your torso to the floor (right). Hold for at least 30 seconds.



Reclining Bound Angle / Lie on your mat with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Bring the soles of your feet together and let your knees fall out to each side. Place one hand on or near your heart and one hand on your belly. Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Hold for at least 30 seconds.

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NINE *Ripping* RACE READY 29ers

29er marathon racing machines? South African MTBers are spoilt for choice. For those at the sharp end of the race, Gear Ed Oli Munnik rustled up a fleet of the best to find out which rides rule the roost – and with so many manufacturers creating lightning-quick bikes these days, his job certainly wasn't easy.

WORDS OLİ MUNNIK

IMAGES GARY PERKIN

SPECIALIZED EPIC

EXPERT CARBON WORLD CUP 29

R76 999

SPECIALIZED.COM/ZA

Best in Test

Specialized's Epic 29er range needs no introduction: they're proven race-winning machines – fast, efficient and convenient.

The Expert is one level down from Specialized's top-end S-Works Epic, with FACT 10m carbon main triangle and M5 alloy rear end. But 'World Cup' means a few tweaks that turn this second-stringer into an aggressive race machine. Three main differences: a dedicated single-ring chassis featuring shorter, stiffer 439mm chainstays (standard Epics have a 448mm, double-chainring chassis); the 0.5°-steeper head angle, making it more aggressive (and twitchy); and 95mm of travel rather than 100. Small differences, but the devil's in the detail – marginal gains, as Team Sky have proven, go a long way.

The first thing you notice is the Expert WC's clean, neat handlebar – thanks chiefly to Specialized's patented Brain suspension system (no lockout actuators) and a 1x11 set-up (no front shifter), and two plastic cable-holders that reduce chatter and movement.

Your shop mechanic will adjust the auto-sag for your weight on first use. After that, it's set-and-forget – but it's worth experimenting to get it perfectly dialled first time.

The FSR suspension and Brain combination is superb, conveniently taking the guesswork out of deciding whether to turn your lockout on or off.

The Brain system (an automatic lockout that keeps your shock firm on the smooth stuff, and responsive when the going gets rough) has two minor drawbacks: the 'clunk' you feel when inertia activates the front and rear shocks (unnerving at first, but you soon get used to it); and you can't control when the system's open or closed. But this is purely a matter of preference – personally, when I'm riding flat-out, I don't want to waste time locking out suspension!

After the dust had settled, four major elements stood out. Firstly, the carbon Roval rims dampened the trail superbly (the Expert was the only carbon-wheeled bike in the shoot-out) and more than made up for the alloy seat-stays. Secondly, the SWAT tool storage system is simply brilliant. Thirdly, the aggressive 29"x 2.3" Ground Control front tyre fitted to the test rig provided consistent, predictable grip (the extra weight is negligible in the bigger picture). And lastly, there's space for two frame-mounted water bottles – a Specialized Epic signature.

The Epic Expert WC is a competitive marathon/XC rider's dream machine.

BEST FOR FLAT-OUT RACING

TECH BRAIN SUSPENSION AND CARBON WHEELS



TREK SUPERFLY

FS 9.9 SL XX1

R110 000

TREKBIKES.COM/ZA/EN

The range-topping Superfly FS 9.9 SL XX1, the Superfly hardtail's full-sus brother, is built to take care of rough terrain fast and comfortably. Sporting an eye-catching paint job, full internal cable routing and a 1x 11 drivetrain, this was one of the brightest, neatest-looking bikes in the shoot-out.

The FS's G2 geometry (based around a front fork offset by 51mm) is designed specifically for 29ers, offering a more stable ride at high speed but allowing precise, agile handling in tight, technical sections.

Trek's Active Braking Pivot (ABP) is another talking point – it kept the rear end tracking and under control noticeably when braking over rough surfaces, delivering a more active ride. It allows the four-bar linkage system to remain active under braking, reducing brake jack.

Thanks to G2 and ABP, out on the trail the SuperFly FS offered a remarkably smooth, fast ride under all conditions, excelling on single track. Looking back at my ride notes, 'feels like a carpet of air' is a pretty accurate description.

The inverted RockShox RS-1 (like all forks built with G2) is custom-made for Trek, as a 46mm offset is the industry standard. In English, the front axle is effectively 5mm further forward, lengthening the bike's wheelbase but not the top

tube or chainstays. To quote a friend of mine who had a spin on the FS, "The RS-1 is the new Assos, my bru."

He's not far off. While RockShox's brand-new top-end marathon/XC fork is relatively expensive, the ride quality is phenomenal. Supple on small bumps, it's stiff enough for great steering precision, handling anything thrown in its path. At the rear, slowing the rebound improved performance under power with the shock in the open setting – great for rough sections, especially climbs. Lockout is switched on and off via a 2-in-1 hydraulic actuator that was effective and easy to operate.

Bontrager 29"x2.2" XR2 tyres hooked up exceptionally well under acceleration, off both cambers and the loose-over-hardpack conditions found around Cape Town.

The sum of the Superfly FS's parts is an all-round performer that's hard to fault. While it's perhaps not quite as hardcore a racer as the Scalpel or the Epic, upgrading to carbon wheels and/or fitting a negative stem would close the gap. Trek's lifetime frame warranty is another significant advantage.

BEST FOR A SMOOTH, FAST RIDE

TECH TREK'S G2 GEOMETRY AND ACTIVE BRAKING PIVOT



CANNONDALE SCALPEL 29

CARBON 1

R80 000

OMNICO.CO.ZA

The Cannondale Scalpel (with the iconic and intriguing Lefty fork) is a household name in South Africa. The carbon chassis at its heart is a pure thoroughbred; built to win the biggest races in the world, it's proven itself time and again.

The steeper-than-average head angle (71.20) and shorter chainstays (444mm) create a hardtail-like experience, with the luxury of a (100mm-travel) dampened rear end. Up front, the superbly stiff carbon Lefty offers 100mm of smooth travel.

On the dirt, the Scalpel lives up to its reputation, offering incredible, best-in-test acceleration in both open and lockout modes. With the shock pressures just right, the Scalpel navigated a variety of terrain with speed, balance and precision – it went exactly where I told it to.

It's definitely best ridden as a sports car, with slightly stiffer suspension dialled in for speed rather than the slightly more luxurious trail experience of the Superfly or Evil Twin. That's not a negative; the Scalpel is simply honouring its thoroughbred heritage.

Chatting to Waylon Woolcock, who races a Scalpel on Team Red-E Blend, confirmed two key elements. Firstly, thanks in large part to its Zero-Pivot Seatstays (ZPS), the Cannondale is extremely stiff. Precise carbon layout allows the stays to flex vertically while

remaining super-stiff, laterally and torsionally. This enhances suspension performance without affecting power delivery – hence its great acceleration.

Second is the high head-tube height, which makes it difficult to achieve a truly aggressive racing position. Though I dropped the 100mm, -15° stem as low as it could go, it still felt slightly high; aftermarket stems are available to solve this. Woolcock has also dropped his Lefty to 90mm, to lower the front end.

Interestingly, internal routing is provided for a dropper post – given the steep head-angle, a good option for racers who ride trails predominantly.

The Scalpel 1 comes specced with a 2x10 Shimano XT drivetrain, great for wider gear selection. A small (but not insignificant) detail was the new Fabric saddle, comfy throughout the test.

Cannondale aren't pulling the wool over anyone's eyes. This is an incredibly fast, agile race machine, perfect for competitive South African marathon racers.

BEST FOR LIGHTNING-FAST ACCELERATION

TECH ICONIC LEFTY AND SUPER-STIFF ZERO-PIVOT SEATSTAYS

Brand-new for 2015 is Swift's Evil Twin dual-sus marathon race bike, designed specifically for South African conditions, with geometry and weight-saving to compete with the likes of the Epics, Sparks and Scalpels. Chatting recently to Rene Baretta, the Evil Twin's designer, it emerged that his brief was to take the race angles of Swift's Detritovore hardtail and add 90mm of rear-end plushness to take the edge off the body-battering SA marathon courses – and improve on the Detritovore's control and traction.

Patrick Morewood helped develop an efficient pedalling platform that's responsive on the techy bits – the ideal combination for any dual-suspension.

Similarly to the Trek Superfly FS, the range-topping Evil Twin is specced with RockShox's upside-down RS-1 front fork. It adds an unmistakable degree of radness to the front end, making you want to ride into things to feel its responsiveness *[Ed's note: under normal circumstances we advise staying as light as possible over terrain, to maintain momentum]*. A RockShox Monarch XX offers 90mm of rear travel.

Adriaan Louw, real-world prototype-tester, describes the Evil Twin as 'fast when the terrain is slow' – something that engineers have worked hard to achieve, through an 'upside-down-smiley-face' kinematics

curve – basically, the travel is firmer at the beginning and end, and plush in the middle.

The suspension didn't disappoint, providing ample damping on rutted roads and through rooty trail sections. With the lockout engaged via a two-in-one, handlebar-mounted hydraulic lever, the Evil Twin stiffened up and shot forward when asked to do so. Responsiveness is key, and the Swift's lockout certainly ticks that box – energetic and lively when open, stiff and firm when closed.

The Evil Twin can fit two large water bottles in its main triangle – a big advantage for racing snakes. The frame is also electronic-drivetrain-compatible, and includes cable routing for a stealth dropper post. An added bonus is a carbon protector that adds only 110g and is bolted to the length of the downtube – I heard more than a few 'pings' coming from rocks hitting the downtube, and was glad to know the frame was protected.

Swift have done their homework: a superb all-rounder, ideal for local marathon and trail conditions.

BEST FOR LONG DAYS IN THE SADDLE

TECH ROCKSHOX RS-1 AND SPACE FOR TWO FRAME-MOUNTED WATERBOTTLES

SWIFT EVIL TWIN

R36 000 (FRAMESET AND REAR SHOCK)

R99 200 (AS FEATURED)

SWIFTCARBON.COM





GIANT ANTHEM X ADVANCED 29ER LTD

R76 995

GIANT-BICYCLES.COM/EN-ZA

Internationally, Giant have shifted focus away from 29ers towards the 27.5" wheelsize. While 650bs (as they are commonly known) have gained traction globally, the MTB landscape in South Africa is still dominated by marathon-specific 29ers.

With this in mind, Giant International's catalogue features only an XT spec for its 'top-end' 29er. Not to be left behind the curve at the top end, local Giant agents have created the custom-specced, range-topping Anthem X Advanced frameset, with top-notch SRAM XX1 build kit and Mavic SLR wheelset – a roaring success, with only three bikes left in the warehouse at the time of writing. But don't panic – Giant SA can build bikes on demand, sourcing the required parts locally. Additionally, 2016 stock (arriving in August) will feature internal routing, mechanical 1x11 XTR and electronic Di2, should your heart so desire.

On the dirt, where things matter most, the Anthem X Advanced felt right at home pinning it through twists and turns on the trails, without the front end feeling overly slack – which means it sprints and climbs efficiently. The Anthem is fast, but also able to navigate through the technical stuff without you having your heart in your

throat. 'Confidence-inspiring' was the word that sprang to mind.

A carbon front triangle is mated to an alloy rear end, which felt lively, especially with the bulletproof Mavic SLX wheelset bringing stiffness and stability to the ride. A torsion bar on the rear triangle adds further stiffness.

The RockShox Sid XX features a hydraulic lockout lever, while the rear Monarch RT3's lockout is shock-mounted. We found the position of the shock made it difficult to get your hand low enough to switch between suspension settings – though that's easily fixed with a RockShox MatchMaker handlebar-mounted actuator.

The 29"x2.2" Continental X-King rubber is branded 'Cape Pioneer' (after the Klein-Karoo-based stage race), and has been engineered in Germany specifically to stand up to perilous SA conditions. The cherry on the top? Every Anthem X Advanced is supplied tubeless, with sealant – no conversion or upgrades needed, just lock 'n' load.

BEST FOR LONG-TERM RELIABILITY

TECH 'CAPE PIONEER' CONTINENTAL TYRES DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY FOR AFRICAN CONDITIONS

I'll never forget the first Merida team-issue dual-sus I saw. It was piloted by charismatic Spaniard José Hermida at the 2007 Cape Epic – his and my first attempt at the event. As the lead bunch riveted at 40+ km/h along a dangerously rutted dual track deep in the Knysna forests, he took his hands off the handlebar, and with a huge smile, imitated shooting some wild beast, screaming, “Bang-bang! We’re in Africa!” The looks on the other riders’ faces...

With that moment seared into my memory, I eagerly awaited the 2015 Ninety-Nine 9. Team, the latest iteration of Hermida’s marathon machine – fortunately, without his trademark bar-ends!

With the 80mm, -17° stem slammed as low as it could go and the nose of the seat angled downwards like the Airwolf attack helicopter, it was full speed ahead. I opted for Merida’s smaller 17” frame, as opposed to a 19”. After only a few minutes on the bike I was glad I had – from the get-go it was incredibly fast, but I hadn’t banked on how lively the ride would be. It descended like a weapon, was stable at speed, and responded instantly when laying down the power.

The relatively short top tube (20mm less than my usual 19”) and aggressive stem, paired with a set of low-profile, yet super-grippy Maxxis

Aspen tyres, made for a riveting ride; I skidded into turns and launched out of the exits. This bike has clearly inherited Jose Hermida’s charisma!

On the suspension, a RockShox Sid XX World Cup front fork and Monarch XX rear shock provide 100mm of plush travel when open, and super-firm damping when locked out – perfect for marathon conditions.

Unique to the Merida, in this shoot-out, was the use of individual hydraulic actuators for front and rear lockout. Normally I’d balk at so many cables and hoses cluttering up the front end. But the lockout actuators are neatly bolted onto two SRAM MatchMaker brake levers; with the 1x11 set-up, you can individually lock out front and rear without myriad attachments clogging your handlebar. Integration for the win.

Bottom line? The Ninety Nine 9. Team is a bike for dominating on any marathon course, especially one that requires you to open up the lockout and let loose on the trail... you’ll be chanting *Olé, Olé-Olé-Olé!*

BEST FOR SNAPPY HANDLING AND VALUE FOR MONEY

TECH CARBON LAY-UP WITH ADDED PENETRATION PROTECTION



MERIDA NINETY-NINE 9 TEAM

R75 000

MERIDA-BIKES.COM





VOLCAN STEALTH FS

R49 000

VOLCANBIKES.COM

Good timing was on our side with the Volcan Stealth FS. This 2016 sample frame emerged from the mould only a few days before landing in South Africa and being shipped to our offices in Cape Town. At the time of going to print the frame was to be ridden in the 2016 Cape Epic by the SA pairing of Max Knox and Kevin Evans – an acid test if ever there was one!

Looking at the frame, the most striking element is the massive box section around the bottom bracket – it's a sight to behold. Pumping through turns and laying down some smack on the open road, it dramatically increased stiffness and provided a solid platform for power transfer. Further improving stiffness is a cross-link underneath the swing link of the rear triangle.

The Stealth FS's slighter head angle gave it good trail manners, translating into a well-behaved bike that follows your lead. The Stan's No Tubes ZTR Crest 29er wheelset and Schwalbe Racing Ralph combination is a firm favourite among local riders, and it's obvious why – consistent grip running on a stiff rim does wonders for ride quality.

Traction and stability are ensured by a RockShox Sid RL 29 front fork and Fox Float CTD rear shock. As neither offers a handlebar-mounted lockout lever, the shock-mounted actuators were nicknamed 'hand-draulic' levers. At the sharp end of a race, or mid-pack against your chinas, handlebar-mounted lockouts help hugely to maintain safety and control, as you don't have to take your hands off the bars. It's a good idea to get these fitted, at least on the front fork.

As our test bike was a sample, the exact build kit for 2016 is not confirmed. What we can tell you is that it will offer 120mm of front and rear travel, and will be equipped with Shimano's soon-to-be-unveiled XT groupset, rumoured to be going 11-speed (high fives for the trickle-down effect!). Fitted with the new XT, the Volcan Stealth FS will offer incredible value for money. And a great ride *nogal*.

The first shipment arrives on 1 August, so get your orders in now.

BEST FOR GREAT-VALUE PERFORMANCE

TECH BRAND NEW CARBON FRAME WITH SUPER-STIFF BOTTOM BRACKET

The Vipa's come a long way, thanks to years of R&D in partnership with suspension guru Patrick Morewood, and feedback from elite-level riders – currently the Kargo Pro MTB team, and world XC masters champion Nico Pfitzenmaier.

Exciting news from Kargo is the recent signing of Swedish XC national champ and World Cup front-rower Emil Lindgren. Victor Momsen is ecstatic to get Lindgren's feedback: "There's no better acid test for the Vipa than World Cup racing – it will certainly drive future development."

Like Specialized, Scott and Giant, Momsen have put a lot of energy into designing their own parts – stems, handlebars, tyres, and grips. This allows easier integration when spec'ing their bikes. The beefy 90mm DOWNer carbon stem, with -20° angle, makes for a striking-looking cockpit; and the clever UP/DOWN handlebar can be run with either a positive- or a negative-5° rise, for a tailored race position.

A highlight was the brand-new Shimano XTR 1x11 drivetrain and brakeset. Shifting is superb, crisp and accurate throughout the shifting map. With a slightly smaller gear range than SRAM's 1x11 10-42T cassette, Shimano's 1x11 drivetrain (with 11-40T cassette) is more for XC lap racing than marathons, where the routes are more diverse. But if you want a wider gear range, you could swop the 1x11-specific chainstay for a front-derailleur-compatible version. Conveniently, Momsen can supply these chainstays (for R4 550), and will assist dealers to perform the change without charging you (ask your dealer for more information).

Alternatively, the Team Issue is also available as a frameset (30% of Vipa's are sold as framesets), so you can buy the chassis and build up your dream dual-suspension with gearing suited to the terrain you ride.

The (size large) frame felt relatively small compared to the rest of the test fleet, but a few tweaks achieved a suitable set-up. The full-carbon chassis was a pleasure to ride, stepping up when asked to deliver speed. With its top-end, kashima-coated Fox suspension, the bike handled very well throughout. Fox's CTD system doesn't offer complete lockout (it's more a stiff damping, with slower compression), so technical climbs were a breeze, as traction was aided by the subtle activation of the rear shock in lockout mode.

BEST FOR THE LATEST IN RACING TECH

TECH SHIMANO'S NEW 1X11 XTR GROUPSET; KASHIMA-COATED FOX FORK AND REAR SHOCK

MOMSEN VIPA TEAM ISSUE

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If you're looking for a new adventure – something left-field, or simply a bit nuts – the Stigmata should be top of the list. Its versatility, ruggedness and badass tequila-sunrise paintjob will blow you away, and have your cuzzies drooling.

Santa Cruz were among the first to develop a carbon-fibre downhill bike – the V10, with which the Syndicate Team have dominated on the world stage. With the knowhow to make extremely strong and durable carbon frames, their engineers set to work to build the Stigmata in such a way that it could take you anywhere... you're limited only by your imagination.

To say the Stigmata catches the eye is like saying the Cape Epic is a pleasant Sunday-afternoon freewheel – it's as radical as the Epic is gruelling. Nowhere was this better illustrated than at the recent Cycle Tour Expo, where a proudly-displayed Stigmata led to 10 complete bikes being sold on the spot in only two days. It just goes to show – people are looking for something to spice things up like a fiery House of Curries roti.

Critical to the Stigmata's inspiring ride is its carbon fork with 15mm thru-axle, made in-house by the wizards at Santa Cruz. Together with the 700x33C Maxxis tubeless tyres it damps trail chatter superbly, and allows an unexpected amount of grip up- and downhill, even when standing. Frame design allows clearance for tyre width up to 41C, which would take things to the next level. You'd be almost invincible on those fat tackies!

Gearing-wise, our test bike was equipped with a 2x11 SRAM Red groupset, which we felt was perfect for switching between on- and off-road.

In terms of capability, the Stigmata is still relatively skinny-wheeled and rigid, and should be ridden as such. Don't expect to hit the biggest, gnarliest tech sections; stick to flowing sections of trail like G-Spot in Stellies or the Spruit in Joburg.

If *Bicycling's* experience is anything to go by, the Stigmata will breathe fresh air into your lungs within seconds of hitting the dirt. We loved it, and you will too. **B**

BEST FOR A NEW CHALLENGE

TECH STRONG, DURABLE CARBON LAY-UP AND TUBELESS TYRES

WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

1. The most important message is that manufacturers across the board are designing and building exceptionally efficient race machines. There are very few 'bad' bikes out there, if any.

2. Some bikes are best for pure speed (think the Scalpel and Epic, with their steep head angles), while others (like the Superfly FS and Evil Twin) offer a more supple ride that's still lightning-fast.

3. Fitting a more aggressive front tyre will go a long way towards inspiring confidence, for a relatively small weight-gain. Increased speed and energy through improved control will benefit you more than losing a few grams running light, skinny tyres.

4. Frame-mounting for tool storage and space for two water bottles is a genuine advantage for racing snakes.

5. Integration of gear, brake and lockout levers is making handlebars a lot cleaner. SRAM are leading this charge with their MatchMaker system.

6. Handlebar width is a key element for any bike; but especially 29ers, with their bigger wheels, which require more leverage to steer and to maintain control. We think your minimum bar width should be 690mm.



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MY SPAR FOREST2FALLS

DATE **1 MAY 2015**

PLACE **MAC MAC FOREST RETREAT,
SABIE, MPUMALANGA**

RACE **75KM, 35KM, 17KM**

THIS ONE'S BACK, WITH ITS USUAL FAMILY-FRIENDLY VIBE. LAST YEAR IT TOOK PLACE OVER A LONG WEEKEND, AND THIS YEAR – WITH WORKER'S DAY ON 1 MAY FALLING ON A FRIDAY – WILL BE NO DIFFERENT. As

always, there will be great entertainment for the kids as well as a festival atmosphere, with stalls and live music. And as it's over a long weekend, you may want to stay an extra day or so and take in what Mpumalanga has to offer.

THE ROUTES

This race takes place on the Drakensberg escarpment and there are three distances, covering all levels of fitness: 75km, 35km and 17km. Each route offers great views of the escarpment, as well as exciting single track and a few other features to keep your heart racing.

TERRAIN

As with all good mountain-bike events, all the routes take you through a variety of different terrains. These include some mountainous bits, lots of single track, forest road, even pine cones. The long 75km route has 1 580m of climbing – enough to determine a KOM and QOM, but not enough to be unbearable. **B**



WHERE TO STAY

1 THE MAC MAC FOREST RETREAT
The most convenient place to stay for the race is at the race venue. The resort comprises four self-catering guesthouses, five permanent tents, and two country houses. Each guesthouse is stocked with cutlery, crockery, stove, fridge, an indoor fireplace, and outdoor braai facilities. There are no TVs in the guesthouses, but there is a pub on the premises with DStv. The safari tents each have a private deck, braai facilities, two single beds, a sleeper couch, and private en-suite bathroom with shower.

CONTACT

Tel: 013 764 2376
Web: macmacforestretreat.co.za

2 PURPLE MOON GUEST HOUSE
If you didn't book in time for the host venue, or prefer more luxurious living arrangements, then the Purple Moon is for you. This is a double-storey cottage that sleeps up to six people. There are two bedrooms each with its own TV, as well as a lounge with a sleeper couch. If you're staying for the weekend then there's no better way to cool off after a hard day out than starting a braai fire, then having your meal on the veranda overlooking the Sabie Mountains.

CONTACT

Tel: 011 394 9719
Cell: 082 555 0514

3 BANANIEN LODGE
Looking for some solitude on your cycling weekend away? Then this is the place for you. These thatched-roofed log cabins are all situated in scenic and indigenous bush, with waterfalls creating a tranquil experience. Each cabin comes fully equipped with kitchen utensils and a stocked bathroom (own towels required, though) for starters; and if you want to warm up before the event, you can hit one of the trails nearby.

CONTACT

Tel: 082 552 8356
Email: info@bananienlodge.co.za
Web: bananienlodge.co.za

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Day 2: 46km
Day 3: 48km**



3 TOWERS *Mncane*

**Day 1: 34km
Day 2: 34km
Day 3: 34km**



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YOUR GUIDE TO THE BEST IN CYCLING FOR MAY & JUNE

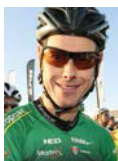


WESTERN CAPE

**AMA RIDER
100-MILER
23 MAY**

As you may have guessed, this event covers 100 miles (160km) in a single day, out in the Swartland. Starting and finishing in Malmesbury, the route winds its way over many farms and areas not normally open to riders, which gives participants the opportunity to ride their bikes in new territory. The terrain is non-technical to ensure the distance is manageable, but there's also a 50-Miler (80km) ride, which kicks off at the race's halfway mark in Riebeeck-Kasteel.

– Renay Groustra



GAUTENG

**FOREVER RESORTS
BADPLAAS CYCLE
TOUR
13-16 JUNE**

Based at Badplaas in Mpumalanga, this four-day tour is open to veteran riders, and will include an elite category as well as an open category for non-licensed riders. It consists of three road stages, a hill climb and a time trial. Elite racers get two extra distance stages, veterans will enjoy predominantly downhill routes, and all stages finish at the Forever Badplaas resort. This event is for the more serious road-rider. Get more information at

www.hatoere.co.za

– Nic White



KWAZULU-NATAL

**THE HUSQVARNA
MID-ILLOVO MTB
CHALLENGE
17 MAY**

This route sweeps through the Gwahumbe Game Reserve, then off through the Sappi forest, and is split over two distinct terrains: the course starts with rough and loose gravel sections, then heads into some slippery (and typically Sappi) groomed single track, mixed up with a daunting climb. This is a quick 45km that is super-fun and well-organised. Don't be fooled, short means fast, so come ready to ride.

For more, check out

www.husqvarnaclassic.co.za

– Bryan Powell

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GAUTENG**MTB****1 MAY WINTER FAST ONE****MTB** 70km, 40km, 12km

Lido Hotel, Eikenhof, Johannesburg
Contact Spectrum Sport Events
events@spectrumsport.co.za,
072 243 0662
Online Entries cycleevents.co.za

24 MAY BELL OF HOPE CYCLE CHALLENGE 50km, 15km

Valverde Country Club, Cradle of Humankind. Contact Kerry von Buddenbrock ebenezerspy@gmail.com, 081 000 6938
Web ebenezerspy.co.za
Online Entries cycleevents.co.za

30 MAY NISSAN TRAILSEEKER SERIES #1 – BUNDU BASH

70km, 40km, 20km, 10km
ARC Roodeplaat, Buffelsdrift
Contact Amelia info@advendurance.com, 086 199 0001
Web advendurance.com
Online Entries jumpertrax.com

MULTI-SPORT**20 JUNE MOMENTUM HEALTH OATWELL DUALX #2 POWERED BY PEPTOPRO**

ARC Roodeplaat, KwaMhlanga/Moloto road (R573), Roodeplaat, Pretoria. Contact Amelia info@advendurance.com, 086 199 0001
Web: advendurance.com
Online Entries jumpertrax.com

MPUMALANGA**MULTI-SPORT**

1 MAY MY SPAR FOREST2FALLS 75km, 35km, 17km
Mac Mac Forest Retreat, near Sabie
Contact Chris forest2falls@gmail.com, 082 467 3079
Web forest2falls.co.za
Online Entries entrytime.com

MTB**3-6 MAY SABIE XPERIENCE**

205km

The Floreat Riverside Lodge, Sabie
Contact Sandy Korb
race-office@sabiexperience.co.za,
013 764 3500
Web and entries sabiexperience.co.za

13-16 JUNE FOREVER RESORT BADPLAAS CYCLE TOUR

431km (4-Day), 329km (Vets)
Forever Resort, Badplaas
Contact Ansie de Jager
ansie@hatoere.co.za, 083 411 2480

FREE STATE**MTB****2 MAY ANATOMIC DIRTMAX MTB SERIES 2015 (EVENT #2)**

60km, 30km, 10km, 4km
Stonehenge in Africa, Parys
Contact Belinda Basson
info@dirtdmax.co.za, 056 817 6445,
083 595 8439
Web dirtdmax.co.za
Online Entries cycleevents.co.za

16 MAY FAMILY DAY RACE

70km, 35km, 5km
Waterwese (Oranje-Riet Waterverbruikersvereniging), Jacobsdal. Contact Elsabe van Heerden jonelvervoer@mweb.co.za, 072 027 7908

KWAZULU-NATAL**MTB****2 MAY BELL BIG 5 SERIES CHALLENGE** 50km, 25km, 10km

Mtunzini Country Club
Contact Seonaid Beningfield
082 452 6372
Web big5mtb.co.za
Online Entries roag.co.za

2 MAY SPUR KZN SCHOOLS

MTB SERIES #4 XCO Lap Racing
Maritzburg College, Pietermaritzburg
Contact Ewan Cochrane
ewan@multisportschool.co.za,
082 674 2138
Online Entries roag.co.za

2-3 MAY GREYTOWN MTB

CLASSIC 50km, 35km, 25km
The Beehive, Greytown
Contact Dean Brown 082 789 0193
Web greytownmtb.co.za
Online Entries roag.co.za

8-10 MAY SAPPI KARKLOOF

CLASSIC 60km, 40km, 20km, 10km, Enduro
Karkloof Country Club
Contact Andrew van Rensburg
andrew@impiconceptevents.com
Web karkloofmtb.co.za
Online Entries roag.co.za

17 MAY HUSQVARNA MID-ILLOVO CLASSIC MTB 40km, 18km, 10km

Mid-Illovo Club
Contact Shanon Mackenzie
info@roag.co.za, 082 493 4466
Web husqvarnaclassic.co.za
Online Entries roag.co.za

23 MAY SPUR KZN SCHOOLS

MTB SERIES #5 XCO lap racing
Location: TBC. Contact Ewan Cochrane ewan@multisportschool.co.za, 082 674 2138
Online Entries roag.co.za

24 MAY COMPENDIUM MTB

DERBY 45km, 20km, 10km, 5km
Shongweni Polo Club, Hillcrest
Contact Tim Whitfield
info@hill2hill.co.za, 072 125 2382
Web mtbderby.co.za
Online Entries roag.co.za

6-7 JUNE KZN PROVINCIAL DOWNHILL & ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIPS

Cascades MTB Park
Contact KZN MTB
info@kznmtb.co.za, 082 896 6864
Web kznmtb.co.za
Online Entries roag.co.za

7 JUNE**BELL BIG 5 SERIES #2 – ELEPHANT CHALLENGE**

Richards Bay 50km, 25km, 10km
Zululand Multi-Sport Club
Contact Race Office
info@big5mtb.co.za

Web big5mtb.co.zaOnline Entries roag.co.za**13 JUNE SPUR KZN SCHOOLS**

MTB SERIES #6 XCO lap racing
Northwood School, Durban North
Contact Ewan Cochrane
ewan@multisportschool.co.za,
082 674 2138
Online Entries roag.co.za

WESTERN CAPE**MTB****10 MAY WILDE GRAVEL TRAVEL PRESENTED BY OLYMPIC** 60km, 30km, 15km

Kleinevalleij, Wellington
Contact Pieter van Wyk pvanwyk@ibits.co.za, 082 857 3180
Web graveltravel.co.za
Online Entries roag.co.za

23 MAY AMA RIDER 100-MILER 160km, 80km

Swartland Cellars, Malmesbury
Contact AMA Rider info@dirtopia.co.za, 021 884 4752
Web and entries amarider.co.za

30 MAY MONTAGU MOUNTAIN MANIA 80km, 55km, 30km, 10km

Avalon springs Hotel, Montagu
Contact Ilse Esterhuyse ilse@mountainmania.net
Phone: 072 125 1854
Web and entries mountainmania.net

NORTH WEST**MTB****6 JUNE ASHBURTON INVESTMENTS NATIONAL MTB SERIES #4** 120km, 75km, 45km, 20km, 10km

Van Gaalen Cheese Farm
Contact Wessel van der Walt
info@advendurance.com,
086 199 0001
Web advendurance.com
Online Entries nationalmtbseries.com

6 JUNE SAFARI KARNAVAL MTB CHALLENGE 50km, 25km, 15km

NH Kerk Grounds, N4 Highway, Groot Marico
Contact Johan 079 699 1237
Online Entries entrytime.com

27 JUNE

KONKA MTB 65km, 35km, 10km
Konka, Rustenburg
Contact Hennie 083 226 9730
Online Entries cycleevents.co.za **B**

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THE FRAME

► PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF DYLAN WIGGILL



INSPIRED BY WATCHING THE WESTERN PROVINCE DOWNHILL GUYS - ON A PART
OF THE TRAIL THEY WEREN'T USING. ⑤

SUBMITTED BY @DYLANWIGGILL

→ Share your good times with us on Instagram. Tag your ride photos to @Bicycling_SA using the hashtag #BicyclingFun and you could be featured in an upcoming issue! (Remember to mention where the shot was taken!)



1 HOUR, 18 MINUTES

Races can be won, but are seldom dominated. Congratulations to Annika Langvad and Ariane Klein on taking a back-to-back Absa Cape Epic victory aboard the S-Works Era. [Specialized.com](https://www.specialized.com)



ABSA CAPE EPIC AFRICAN CHAMPS

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NO SHORTCUTS

Photo: Nick Muzik

